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Light in the Dark Belt

The Story of Rosa Young
as Told by Herself

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Prefatory Note.

This little volume is to tell its readers in plain, simple words how the almighty God, for Christ's sake, in a mysterious way, prepared and led me and a host of others out of the gross darkness which hung like a dense fog over our souls into the marvelous light of His salvation.

Sad to say, I am not so fortunate as many others or as was Timothy of old, to whom St. Paul could write: "And that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." 2 Tim. 3, 15. I was born and reared in gross darkness, wholly ignorant of the true meaning of the saving Gospel contained in the Holy Bible. Not until I was instructed in Luther's doctrine pure, did I really understand the chief parts of this Christian religion in which I now rejoice. But the God who rules the universe, who provides for the little birds, for the tiny insects, the wild goats, and the young lions, who takes care of the little colored children in all seasons, in every condition and under all circumstances, through evil report as well as good, saw my distress and willed from all eternity that I be saved, that I, together with a host of others, be led by missionaries into the Lutheran Church to receive the pure Gospel, believe, and be made an heir of life eternal. THE AUTHOR.

Introduction.

I shall begin this volume with an apology for writing it. The reason for making an apology is this: I never thought that I had done enough in this world to warrant an autobiography. Thrice in the summer of 1927 such a thought came to my mind; but abashed at the thought of writing what I had done, I soon abandoned the plan altogether. I said to myself, however, that I hoped I should be able to write something just before I died and leave it with the family to have it printed. I was never much inclined to tell what I have done, am doing, or can do, because I always feared my doing this would develop into selfishness.

How it happened that I took courage again and nevertheless conceived the idea of writing an autobiography was as follows. During the summer of 1927 I received a letter from Miss Viola Wehrs, daughter of Rev. and Mrs. H. C. Wehrs, of Thiensville, Wis. She was a member of the Sunshine Band, a little sewing-circle in the congregation there which, under the leadership of Rev. and Mrs. Wehrs, had shown a deep interest in our mission-work among the colored people, and especially in me personally, for the past five years and had proved their interest and love by material aid and letters of encouragement. The letter from Miss Wehrs touched my heart to the very depths, for she was the namesake of my deceased sister Viola Young, and every letter I received since that time from Miss Viola seemed like a message from my own sister. Every time I sat down to write a letter to Miss Viola Wehrs, it seemed like writing to my own sweet sister. I wrote Miss Viola all about my deceased sister, and we became friends.

One day I received a letter in which she asked me for the early experience of my life, before I became a Lutheran.

This request greatly embarrassed me, for I saw that I would have to say a great deal about myself. But still I did not like to disappoint my friend in this matter. After pondering over the matter, I wrote Miss Viola that I would write the desired letter, but that at present I was not enjoying very good health.

Time passed, and I received another letter from Miss Viola, saying that she would be glad if I should regain my health and thus become able to write that letter. When I read that, I again became embarrassed. Time passed on, and I thought she would forget about the matter; but, alas! there came another request, stating that she was still looking for my letter. I made up my mind right then and there to give this information to my dear friend. I set to work, and after several days of long toiling I completed the desired letter. As I was on the point of putting it in my mail-box, the thought came to me that I ought to let Superintendent G. A. Schmidt see the letter before I sent it away, for he is at the head of the work in Alabama and is responsible for everything. I felt that he should know of everything going out or coming into the State that pertains to our mission-work. I laid the letter aside and wrote to Superintendent Schmidt about it, telling him that I would send him the letter for inspection, if he so desired. I also gave my reason for asking his opinion of the letter.

A few days after, I received a reply from Superintendent Schmidt, in which he asked me to send that letter to him. He stated that he would mail it from his office if I would give him the lady's address. This I did. So the letter was forwarded from the Superintendent's office to my dear friend Miss Wehrs.

Several weeks later I received an acknowledgment of the letter from Miss Wehrs. She said the letter was wonderful, and thought it ought to be published. I replied

that as far as I was concerned, it might be done, but in that case it would be better to take the matter up with Director of Missions Drewes, of St. Louis, or Superintendent Schmidt, of Selma, Ala., as they had charge of our missions in Alabama.

Shortly after this I received a letter from Mrs. H. C. Wehrs. She, too, told me that she thought the letter was wonderful and a powerful sermon on prayer. She said she had made a copy of Miss Viola's letter and asked me to permit her to read it to her friends. She also requested me to write her a letter telling her of all my experiences from the time I entered the Lutheran missions up to the day when I gave up my work at Selma. This I agreed to do, and I also volunteered to write my autobiography in full and send it to her. She and Rev. Wehrs could then take the matter up with Director Drewes about having it published in pamphlet form and sold for general missionary purposes.

A Few Words by White Friends.

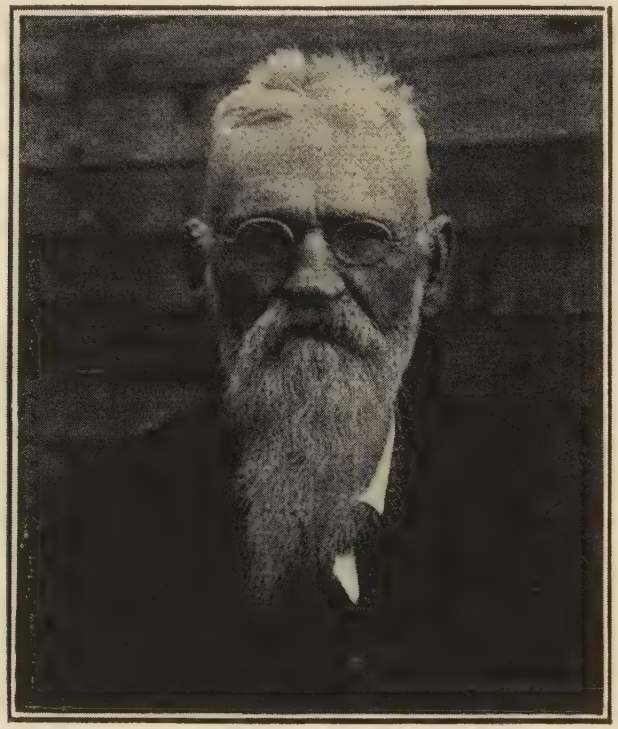
In the year 1915 there nestled in a pine-forest grove, near the village of Rosebud, Ala., a small schoolhouse presided over by Miss Rosa Young. The outlook was indeed gloomy for her. There was no equipment, no benches, no desks, — nothing but dirt, squalor, and poverty. Outside there was grass, and there were trees; the inside was crowded with half-clad piccaninnies. Where was she to look for help? From what source could she draw for support except God? She knew the hearts of these little ones must be changed as well as their minds. She called to mind a passage of Scripture she had read in Is. 62, 1: "For Zion's sake will I not hold My peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth."

Miss Young determined that she would not hold her peace nor rest until the righteousness of that place went forth as brightness. She applied to Dr. Booker T. Washington for help. His reply was, "I am carrying all that I am able to carry." He referred her to the Lutheran Board of Missions at St. Louis.

She felt that she was a watchman on the wall and remembered another verse of Scripture, Is. 62, 6. 7: "I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night; ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence and give Him no rest till He establish and till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth."

Full of zeal for the Master, full of energy, full of indomitable courage, and with a will that knew no turning back, she determined to make the little schoolhouse a praise in all the earth.

She applied to the Board of Missions at St. Louis with a happy result. One morning there came limping into Rosebud a tall, majestic-looking man, Rev. N. J. Bakke. At first sight you could see that he was a prince in the house of David. His first inquiry was for Miss Rosa



The Hon. John T. Dale, Oak Hill, Ala.
A warm friend of our work in Alabama.

Young. Providentially he fell into good hands, for Mr. and Mrs. J. Lee Bonner gave him shelter. He said that this was like the shade of a great rock in a weary land.

When he arrived at the schoolhouse and took in the situation, his heart almost failed him. He saw no hope except in the teacher; he saw at first glance that she was made out of strenuous stuff, which knows no failure.

Together they went to work, trusting in the God of battles, in the God of nations, in the God who takes care of the little Negro children as well as of the white. They labored on, taking for their motto the old Latin maxim, "Labor conquers all things."

From this small beginning the Lutheran Church in Alabama has grown and spread like a green bay-tree. The colored people have flocked to her like doves to the windows. Her arms are still stretching out, taking in new territories year by year, and under the leadership of the Rev. G. A. Schmidt she is determined to become a power in the religious world. All this is due, primarily, to the zeal and energy of Miss Rosa J. Young.

And now a word to the Lutheran Church of Alabama. When Miss Young dies, erect a monument to her memory with this inscription (for it was her aim in life to glorify God and to work to extend Christ's kingdom on earth): "I will make Thy name to be remembered in all generations; therefore shall the people praise Thee forever and ever." Ps. 45, 17. J. T. DALE.

* * *

Picture in your mind a forlorn-looking woman sitting under an oak-tree just outside the front-yard fence of a white man's yard, looking into space, sad and dejected, when the lady of the house, upon going to the front, discovered her.

"Why, Rosa, what is the matter?" she asked when she viewed the scene.

"Miss Eula, I have done all I could to hold my little school together, and I do so want to try to teach them so as to enable them to lead better lives and uplift them. I have no means with which to carry on the school, and I feel, after all my hard struggle, that I shall have to give it up. This is a stab in my heart, for I have tried so hard to hold the school; yet what can I do?"

"Appeal to your Church," replied the lady.

"I have done so time and again; but they say they can't help me."

Some time after, this lady saw her, and on asking how she felt about the situation, Miss Young said, "I have appealed to Booker T. Washington for help, and he advised me to write to the Lutheran Mission Board in St. Louis for help, as they might assist me." Imagine this lady's great joy when the chairman of the board agreed to send Rev. N. J. Bakke, then on his way to St. Louis, to look into this matter. He came on Saturday afternoon, December 18, and preached to this little band on Sunday. This lady begged and besought Rev. Bakke to help Miss Young for the sake of the race. Her prayers were answered; and there was started that Saturday night the Alabama Lutheran Mission.

Rosa J. Young deserves more praise and credit for what she has done for her Master and her race than any missionary on the foreign field, none excepted. We feel sure there will be a great reward awaiting her at that Last Great Day. MR. AND MRS. J. LEE BONNER.

Chapter 1. Beginnings.

And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. — *Is. 65, 24.*

In writing this autobiography, I shall endeavor to avoid fine figurative phrases, which might cause you to draw on your imagination too strongly, thereby becoming misleading. I wish to give you real facts in the most simple manner.

I was born at Rosebud, in Wilcox Co., Ala., May 14, 1890, in a church that stood on a plot of land about one mile from the present site of our oldest Lutheran mission in Alabama. My parents are Grant and Nancy Young, both now advanced in age, but devout Christians and very dutiful in church attendance. My father was an African Methodist pastor for about twenty years. My mother is a woman of high morals. Much credit is given to her by all who know her for the manner in which she reared her family of ten children. We can never forget her teachings. My deceased sister, the only one of us that reposes beneath the sod, thanked mama on her dying-bed for the way she had reared us.

I am the fourth of the ten children. I dare say it will sound strange to you to learn that I was born in a church. I shall try to explain.

They tell me that on the plot of land where I was born there was once located an African Methodist church, near the residence of Mr. J. Lee Bonner's father. The Bonner family could not rest during the services held in this church on Sunday nights. The members of the church made too much noise, shouting, hallooing, clapping their hands, and stamping their feet. The services became annoying. Thereupon Mr. Bonner worked out a plan to rid

Rosa J. Young.

himself and his family of this church. He sold the plot of land on which it stood to one of his friends. This friend persuaded my grandfather to buy the land, and thus the church and the land became grandfather's.

Just about this time my father and mother were looking for a house, and grandpa permitted them to move into the church and make their home there. How long they lived there I do not know, but my parents told me that I was born in that church.

I am unable to tell much about my early youth. As long as I can remember, I would tell all who asked me that I was going to be a teacher. One of the first things I can remember is that we lived in a log hut and that I had a blue-backed speller. I do not know whether I was taught or whether I learned anything in my speller, but I clearly remember that I lost my book and grieved over this a long time. Afterwards I found the lost book in a deep crack of the wall of the log house and rejoiced over it.

The next note I find of myself is that I was sent to school and that I completed the alphabet class the first day I went to school. The name of the teacher was Brice Hines. He placed me in the alphabet class and took me out the same day. That did not take place very often, for it generally took the average pupil two years to learn the alphabet in those days down in this dark section. So I am told. After that day in Brice Hines's school I do not remember whether I continued in school or not; but the next thing I remember is that I had another spelling-book, *Patterson's Speller,* and that I attended night-school with the older children. We went to my grandfather's house, where Mitchell Young, my father's brother, a student of Tuskegee Institute, instructed us.

I do not know how long I studied with Mitchell Young

or what became of him. The next account that I can give of myself after having lost sight of Mitchell Young was that I had no teacher. I had only one book and that was the Bible. I remember well that I would sit for hours all by myself and read the Bible. Besides reading the Bible I would pray often. Mother taught me the Lord's Prayer with a switch. She also taught me my first recitation. The following is part of it, all that I can remember:

1. A little child who loves to pray
   And read the Bible, too,
Shall rise above the skies one day
   And sing an angel adieu.

2. Shall live in heaven, that world above, etc.

This poem had a great deal to do with my reading of the Bible and praying so often, for I wished to be one of those little children who would some day rise above the sky and sing an angel's farewell and live in heaven, that world above. Those last lines lingered in my little heart; but I had set out in the wrong way to win what I longed for by just reading the Bible and praying. I did not know that I could not read the Bible and pray enough to win heaven. The poor little soul was started on the wrong road to heaven in its very childhood.

The first hymn that I could sing I learned from my two older sisters, Flora and Ida. They had learned it in Sunday-school. I remember the first verse was as follows: —

Can it be right for me to go
   On in this dark, uncertain way?
Yet I believe and do not know
   Whether my sins are washed away.

That hymn was misleading. The poet says he believes, and still he says that he does not know if his sins are washed away. He should have known that, for the Bible tells us that all our sins are washed away if we believe in

Jesus, our Savior. So you can see that my poor little soul was in darkness, groping blindly for salvation.

I do not know how long I was at home studying the Bible, and that without a teacher. The next recollection I have is of my being sent back to school and making the fifth grade the first day I entered this school. The teacher was a certain Prof. D. L. House, a graduate of Hampton Institute, Hampton, Va. He was my teacher often from then on until I entered the college at Selma. I never studied the first-, second-, or fourth-grade books. I studied the Webster blue-backed and Patterson spellers and the Bible and then entered the fifth grade. From that time on I was in regular attendance at the public schools. I loved to go to school and hardly missed a day. No matter how cold, hot, or wet it was, I went to school unless sickness prevented me from going. Even during the seasons when we had to do work on the farm, I scarcely missed a day. I would rise early in the morning, go to the field, work until the first bell rang, hastily change to school-clothes, and arrive at school in time. After school I would change my clothes again and return to the field to work until nightfall. I really enjoyed the farm-work and always tried to outdo my brothers in whatever work we undertook.

I soon became the family teacher. I taught all the younger children at home every night. They did not attend school. I think my teaching must have been good, as my brother Sheffield Lorenz, who never attended public school, but whom I taught from the time he became of school age, made the seventh grade when he entered Snow Hill Institute, Ala.

During this period of my life I was also sickly, suffering with rheumatism. At one time I was helpless for eight weeks, and after that I had to walk with a crutch for over a year. All the neighbors said I would hardly

be able to walk again; but the Lord restored me to my former health. After that the neighbors, both white and colored, advised my parents to continue sending me to school and to give me an education, saying I was so industrious and apt as a scholar and not so strong physically. All these sayings helped to encourage my parents to send me to high school.

I was baptized and received into the African Methodist Church in 1900, at the age of ten years. The first Sunday that I remember ever going to church in my life I was "converted." Prior to this time I had always been obliged to stay at home on Sundays with the smaller children and take care of them. Papa was always busy attending to his church-work, while mama and the three older children attended Sunday-school and church every Sunday. The morning of that Sunday on which I attended church for the first time, I was playing out in the yard with the other children. My mother called me and asked me whether I wanted to go to church. I said I did. So I went into the house and was dressed for church. I listened very attentively to the preacher, a Rev. S. P. Inge. He had been conducting revival meetings, and this was the closing Sunday. His text was part of the seventeenth verse of the twenty-first chapter of Genesis: "What aileth thee, Hagar?" The emotional old preacher worked upon the emotions of the people as he pleaded the cause of Christ, and every time he would come down, he exclaimed, "O Hagar, what aileth thee?" The words of that passage of Holy Scripture lodged in my heart that day. It seemed as if the old preacher were talking directly to me only. He made me feel as if every one else were doing exactly what God willed them to do except me and that he was pleading with me to do God's will. I well remember how those words rang in my heart.

After he had finished preaching, he sang two hymns. The first one was as follows: —

1. Come, ye that love the Lord,
And let your joys be known,
Join in a song with sweet accord,
Join in a song with sweet accord,
And thus surround the throne,
And thus surround the throne.

2. Let those refuse to sing
Who never knew our God;
But children of the heav'nly King,
But children of the heav'nly King,
May speak their joys abroad,
May speak their joys abroad.

The first two lines of the second stanza struck me: "Let those refuse to sing who never knew our God." I saw right there that I could not sing then; so I was still.

The next hymn he sang was the following: —

I am bound for the Promised Land,
Who will come and go with me?
I am bound for the Promised Land,
Who will come and go with me?

I remember well how all the way home as I walked along behind my mother and sisters the words of that text rang in my heart: "Hagar, what aileth thee? O Hagar, what aileth thee?" In the dead hours of that night I lay in my little bed, weeping until my pillow was wet, praying the Lord's Prayer — all that I knew. I felt that I was treating God worse than all the other people. It seemed as though my heart would burst for sorrow because I had not done right. Every time I awoke during the night, I wept and prayed myself to sleep again, and I always heard the words of that text ringing in my heart: "Hagar, what aileth thee?"

The next morning — at least it was one Monday

morning of the year 1900 — I had an experience that was similar to that of other African Methodists who had been "converted." The Holy Ghost came upon me, and I was filled with the Spirit. I broke and ran into the room to prevent any of the family from hearing or seeing me cry. I said, "I have got religion, but I am not going to tell anybody." The devil shot his arrows into my heart, saying, "Don't you tell it; they will laugh at you. They will not believe you. You will have to give up all the games you have been playing." I decided not to tell. I sneaked off to the field. While at work, the Holy Ghost moved in my heart. Again I heard the words of the text: "Hagar, what aileth thee?" I burst into tears and cried out, "I have got religion. My sins are forgiven." The children screamed with laughter. I rushed home to my mother, the children following behind me and laughing. I told mama that I had religion. She made the children stop laughing. Then I went to grandmother, and when I told her, she cried. I told my sisters. They mocked, "Rosa got religion the first time she went to church!"

The preacher had closed his revival meetings that Sunday. All the new members gained through his revival had been taken into the church. I desired to go to church again and be baptized and fellowshiped, but mother never said a word about my going to church again, and I was afraid to ask her. I did not know what to do. I waited and waited. Each Sunday I lingered, listening for some one to say something about going to church. At last I began to pray, asking the Lord to help me to get to church, so that I could be baptized. I remember well how I prayed and kept on praying, until one morning I heard my mother tell sister Flora to go to the store and get two dress patterns, as she wished to make Viola and Rosa some dresses, so that they could go to church. Oh, my

heart jumped for joy, and I said, "The Lord has answered my prayer!"

Shortly after this I was taken to church one Sunday morning, and the pastor baptized me. He announced that he would have me fellowshiped into the church that night; but I was never fellowshiped into the Methodist Church because my mother did not tell me to return to church in the evening.

I had a second experience. I wished to see many strange things and hear voices, as I had heard other people say they had seen and heard when they were "converted." I began to doubt that I had got religion and started to pray again, asking the Lord to show me plainly whether I was converted. I continued to pray and pray, listening for strange voices or waiting to see strange sights.

One day I went to my grandmother's house. She told me to come to her and asked me where that religion was that I told her I had got some time ago. I began to tremble with fear, for I did not know what she would say. At last I replied in a low tone of voice, "I have it." When I looked at her, she was crying, and through her tears she said, "Something continues to reason in my heart, saying, 'Talk to that child, talk to that child.'" So she left her work and had a long religious talk with me. I left her home rejoicing.

From that time on I attended Sunday-school and church regularly. I now began to use prayer in everything I undertook. Prayer was, or seemed to have become, a part of my life.

When I was far enough advanced in my elementary studies, I prayed to the Lord to help me enter high school. The Lord answered my prayers, and our parents made preparations to send us to Payne University at Selma, Ala.

Chapter 2. More Schooling.

O Thou that hearest prayer, unto Thee shall all flesh come. *Ps. 65, 2.*

When I completed my elementary education in the public schools, the Lord gave me a strong desire for a higher education. There is no good thing within us; all good things without and within us come from God. The words of the Bible-verse: "If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it," John 14, 14, seemed to have been written in large print upon my heart; for whenever I wanted anything, I prayed to God for it. Before I undertook doing anything, I would first take it to the Lord in prayer. When matters went wrong in the home with me or any other member of the family, I would steal away and talk to Jesus about it. I believed in prayer, prayer, prayer. Prayer will bring you things which nothing else will or can give you. Being a great believer in prayer, I went to the Lord and asked Him to give me a higher education. I prayed and prayed, asking the Lord Jesus to open a way for me to receive a higher education. I even vowed to the Lord that, if He would give me a higher education, I would serve Him with it. This I prayed almost incessantly.

The Lord did hear and answer my prayer when His time came. "Mine hour is not yet come," the Savior, on one occasion, said to Mary. John 2, 4. These words are meant for all believers. The Savior wants to teach us that He will help us when His time comes, no sooner, no later; but He will give us what we ask of Him in plenty of time for us to use it to our best advantage. Never can a Christian say of Jesus that He sent him help, but that it was too late. Jesus always sends His help in due time.

As I said before, the Lord did answer my prayer, and

it came to pass in this wise. There lived near our old home at Rosebud a very fine white family, Mr. J. C. Harper, his mother, sister, and brother. When we were young children, living in the country, our parents would often allow us to help Mr. Harper together with the other colored people of the community, and he would always pay us well for our work.

One day while I was picking cotton in one of Mr. Harper's cotton patches, a little ahead of the other cotton-pickers, singing to myself the following little plantation song, "Give me Jesus, give me Jesus; you may have all this world, give me Jesus," Mr. Harper came riding along on a big red saddle-horse. Looking down upon me, he said, "Rosa, your people ought to educate you; they sure ought to give you an education. You are teaching these other children how to work. You teach them in their books at night, too, don't you?" I answered, "Yes, sir." Then he rode away, saying something to himself which I did not understand. When evening came, I went home and told my parents what Mr. Harper had said. Soon after this it became the common talk among the various relatives that I should be sent to high school.

I was greatly pleased with this and felt greatly uplifted in spirit. I gained fresh courage to pray for a higher education. The Lord moved the hearts of my parents, and they fully decided to send me to high school. I was a happy, happy little soul. The question then arose which school I was to attend, the Snow Hill Normal and Industrial Institute at Snow Hill or Payne University at Selma. As Payne University was our church-school at that time, it was soon decided to send me to Payne.

It may be interesting to you, dear readers, to know that Payne University was founded by Bishop D. A. Payne and that he was once a Lutheran. One day, in a conversation with the late Rev. Bakke, shortly after he had begun

his mission-work in Alabama, he asked me where I had been educated. I told him at Payne University. He said, "I wonder if that school is named for Daniel." "I do not know, sir," I replied. "They called him Bishop D. A. Payne." Rev. Bakke started in surprise as if he would spring from his chair, while his face flushed and glowed like a live coal.

"That is Daniel! That is Daniel! — D. A. Payne. He was a Lutheran. Daniel was reared in the Lutheran Church and educated at Gettysburg Seminary, Gettysburg, Pa. (General Synod). When he graduated in 1823, they did not have any work for him to do among the colored people. He went about preaching on the streets, and finally they lost sight of him; he drifted away."

According to the history of the African Methodist Church, Bishop Payne drifted into this church shortly after Richard Allen, its founder, severed his relations with the white Methodist Episcopal Church. Bishop Payne was a great man in the African Methodist Church. He was considered the most devout bishop in the Church and was called the Apostle of Education. He founded twenty-six schools for that Church.

Payne University, which offers a high-school course, is located in the city of Selma, not many blocks from our Alabama Luther College. In those dark days, in this section of the country, the majority of the people who lived in the country never visited the city, and the city people seldom came to the country; so there was practically no communication between the country folks and the city people. However, as the Lord was pleased to have it, there was a certain Mrs. Ellen Hunt, an old friend and playmate of my father's, who, some years previous, had moved from the vicinity of our old home to West Selma. My father told me to write Mrs. Hunt and ask her whether I could board with her; for at that time there were no

dormitories at Payne University. With a happy heart I soon had my letter written, and it was sent to the post-office.

What was to be done next? I did not see anything for me to do but pray. I earnestly besought the Lord to make Mrs. Hunt willing to give me shelter in her home. As was my custom, I resorted to prayer day and night. Several weeks passed, and we heard nothing. When the Lord's time came, Mrs. Hunt answered my letter. She said she could not take me, but she had secured a nice boarding-place for me with her dear old friends Nathan and Fanny Pullum.

My little heart leaped for joy when I read that. Mrs. Pullum urged my father to bring me at once, as the school had already opened.

When the time came for us to leave, father did not have to buy very much for me. Through the help of the Lord I had picked cotton and made money enough to buy all my books, pay my fare to Selma, and buy all my clothes. Please remember that in those days schoolchildren did not have as many clothes as the schoolchildren do these days, nor were the clothes so expensive.

One night in the fall of 1903 — I do not remember the month — papa and I boarded the train at the Allenton station *en route* for Payne University. After a ride of a few hours we arrived in the Central City. Mrs. Hunt met us at the station. She greeted us kindly as we alighted from the coach of the train. Father introduced me to her, and soon bidding us good night, he went to the meeting-place of his conference, which was already in session. The old city was lighted up, and my childish eyes gazed with great amazement at the bright scene as we walked along Broad Street as far as the city clock, where we turned down Dallas Street for West Selma. Everything was so strange to me. It seemed as if I had been

caught up in the air and placed down again in an altogether different world. Mrs. Hunt took me to her home, where I was to spend my first night in Selma.

When I awoke the next morning, there stretched before my eyes another amazing scene: fine houses of different colors, paved sidewalks, beautiful trees, grass, and flowers. It was quite different from the log huts, cabins, cottages, fields, and woods I was accustomed to see at my home in the country. After breakfast, Mrs. Hunt accompanied me to Mrs. Fanny Pullum's home. Then she took me to one Mr. John Henry Williams, who lived on Dallas Street. Here I was to join the Williams children and go to school with them every morning, as I did not know the way from West Selma to Payne University at that time. The Williams family received me kindly, and shortly we were off to school, hurrying merrily along the streets. Soon we arrived at the campus of Payne University, the place where I had longed to go and where I had so fervently and earnestly prayed the Lord to let me study.

Everything mentioned in this part of the book which points to my success in reaching Payne University is due to Jesus. For it was He who had been watching over me, giving me good reason and sound judgment to work out plans by which I could help my parents to get me ready to enter school and prepare myself for the great life-work as a missionary. Jesus had watched over me from infancy, had brought me to this stage in my life, and enabled me to stand upon the campus of this high school. I feel heartily sorry that because of the gross darkness in my soul and my ignorance of God's holy Word at that time I was unable to recognize the almighty hand of God and to receive my daily bread with thanksgiving, as I should have done. It was God who was doing all this for me out of pure fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me. Sad to say, I was in the dark and

could not see it as I do now. It was not until I was instructed in Luther's doctrine pure that I could really see God in everything, that I could see God in the wonderful miracles which He does for His Church, His elect.

Dear readers, it is a great thing to be a Christian, and this, too, I have learned since I became a Lutheran. "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go; I will guide thee with Mine eye." Ps. 32, 8.

God Will Take Care of You.

Be not dismayed, whate'er betide,
God will take care of you;
Beneath His wings of love abide, —
God will take care of you.

God will take care of you,
Through every day o'er all the way;
He will take care of you;
God will take care of you.

All that you need He will provide,
God will take care of you;
Nothing you ask will be denied, —
God will take care of you!

No matter what may be the test,
God will take care of you;
Lean, weary one, upon His breast, —
God will take care of you!

Chapter 3. My Life at Payne University.

Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. — *Matt.* 7, 7.

To experience cruel, harsh, and unkind treatment amid immense obstacles has been no strange thing to me since I started on life's rough sea. The first day I attended Payne University I met with a host of discouragements. There were assembled there about two hundred students.

They laughed, jeered, mocked, and derided me because I came from the country. There were no other children from the country attending the institution at that time. The whole body of uncouth city children ridiculed me until the Williams children, who accompanied me, became ashamed of me, with the exception of one of the girls, Gracie. She remained a friend to me, and from that time on until her death.

After much embarrassment, Gracie and I went to the president's office. Prof. C. H. Henderson of Wilberforce University, Wilberforce, O., was the president. Upon first sight he made the impression of being a good man and of meaning well, and to this day I think that, wherever he may be, he means well. Mrs. A. Wells Henderson, his wife, is an able woman; there is no question about her scholarship; she is versed in science and in languages. There were also four young ladies in the faculty.

After registration I took the examination for the seventh grade and passed it. The high grade I obtained made no impression on the uncouth city children; instead, it seemed to arouse enmity. For a whole month the entire body of students made it very unpleasant for me. I cried every day. I felt like a stranger in a distant land, without a home, friends, or money. I longed for my old country school and would have attempted to run away if I had had the money; but after buying my books I had only one dollar left.

Now, what was I to do but pray? I remembered how I had prayed to get there and how the Lord had answered my prayers. So I resorted to the same tried means that had before brought me success — prayer. There were three things I did almost incessantly: I studied, I cried, and I prayed.

Owing to conditions at home I was obliged to leave school that year two months before it closed. All regretted

to see me leave. Some of those same children who mocked me when I entered, wept when I left.

When I arrived home, I was greeted by all my old friends, both white and colored. During my vacation I attended Sunday-school and church at the Rosebud Methodist Church and helped my parents on the farm. Our farm was three or four miles from our home. We had to leave early in the morning and did not return until night. At noon we sat down to lunch beneath a large elm-tree on the bank of Pursley Creek. I carried my books along with me in a sack each day as if I were going to school. After lunch I would steal away a short distance down the stream from the crowd, where I would lie down on the bank of the creek and study and pray during the noon hour.

That fall I picked cotton for Mr. Harper again in order to help get my things for school: clothes, shoes, money for books, and the railroad fare to Selma. The Lord blessed my efforts. God, out of pure fatherly, divine goodness, enabled me to reenter Payne. I was welcomed by all — schoolmates, classmates, teachers, and friends. I was one month behind the class; however, I mastered the situation very well because I had studied all those lessons down on the banks of the Pursley Creek during the summer.

By the help of the Lord everything went well with me that term. My work in the classroom was satisfactory. We organized the following societies, of which I was elected president and reelected four consecutive years: the Allen League, the Loyal Temperance League, and the Payne Literary Society. There was one discouragement which I had to face that year. My parents shipped my eatables, such as they raised on the farm, to me monthly. I had to go to the freight house and be identified to get them. It was indeed embarrassing for me to go there among

those rough-looking men, and with so many horses and wagons around. I really dreaded the days when I had to go there.

One day, as I was coming out of the freight house, I met a drayman, Mr. Robert Boyd. He asked me what my name was. I told him it was Rosa Young. He then asked me why I came there every month. I explained the situation to him, telling him that I was a student in the school, and as my parents had no money to purchase my food at my boarding-place, they sent me every month such supplies as they raised on the farm. He did not say any more, but from that time, whenever he saw a box or sack marked Rosa Young, he would pay the freight and bring it out to me. This same Mr. Robert Boyd who hauled my freight when I was a girl is now hauling freight for our Lutheran mission in Selma.

That year I again had to leave school before it closed. When I arrived home, I was welcomed by all my old friends as before. That vacation was spent practically the same way as the one of the previous year.

The third year at Payne (1905—06) was a difficult year. I call it the year of hardships. In the first place, there was a new corps of teachers, and they took nothing for granted; a student had to pass or repeat the work. That year we had a new president, Prof. J. M. Henderson, of Detroit, Mich. It was said of him that he had gone to school twenty-five years and that he had five different diplomas.

When I first saw President Henderson, I thought he was the finest specimen of a man, physically, mentally, and spiritually, that I had ever seen. The other teachers for the Normal Department were Prof. J. L. Henderson of Morris Brown College, Atlanta, Ga., his son, Prof. W. H. Bowen, of Canada, and Mrs. A. Wells Henderson, the wife of our ex-president C. H. Henderson.

Secondly, I was a month behind in my work, as they had already taken up those high branches of science that are taught in the Normal Department. Mrs. A. Wells Henderson was kind enough to help me with my back work at night. I would walk across the town several blocks every evening to the place where Mrs. Henderson was boarding, recite my back lessons, then return to my room and prepare my lessons for the next day. In addition to that I had to study the lessons in advance in order to be able to make my class before school closed, because I was obliged to leave school every year before it closed. Therefore I studied till twelve and one o'clock every night.

Thirdly, owing to illness in the Pullum family I had to find a new home. I went to Mrs. N. N. She was the meanest woman I have ever seen. I had to get up before daylight, strip the beds, hang out the bedding, scrub the floor, take in the bedding, cook breakfast, and wash before school every morning. Once I became sick there for a few days. I could not lie in bed during the day. I had to lie on a chair and across my trunk. "Aunt" N. N. stole my groceries, and I would partly have to starve the remainder of the month. She would steal my kerosene, and I would have to lie prostrate before the fireplace and study my lessons by the light of the coals in the grates. I prayed almost incessantly to the Lord to grant me strength to hold on. The Lord did help me, but, as usual, I had to leave for home before the school closed.

That summer I worked but three months on the farm. I taught a private school in the Rosebud Methodist church and was enabled to buy all the things necessary for school and my railroad fare to Selma and had enough money to pay my first month's board.

At the beginning of my fourth year at Payne (1906 to 1907) I found a boarding-place with Mrs. Maggie Austin. There conditions were more pleasant for me.

During that term we published a monthly paper, the *Payne Sentinel,* of which I was chosen editor. The president also appointed me subteacher for the university. Meanwhile I was reviewing for the state examination. The above-mentioned duties required much of my time, and besides I had to prepare my daily class-work. All this mental work was very taxing. That December I passed my first state examination, and during the summer I taught my first public school at Oleo, Ala., near our present-day mission at Vredenburgh.

At the beginning of my fifth year at Payne (1907 to 1908) I moved to the home of Mrs. Lara Gracie, a widow. She was a kind old "mammy"; I called her "Mama" Grace and continued to board with her every year until I finished school. That term I won two prizes, a gold medal in an oratorical contest and the five-dollar prize in the mathematical contest. That year saw my first commencement exercises at Payne. During my vacation that summer I went to Mulberry, Ala., where I taught my second public school.

The sixth year at Payne (1908—09) was my senior year. This was indeed a year of hard mental work. I was a Sunday-school teacher at Brown's Chapel, A. M. E. Church, subteacher at the school, president of the societies of our school, editor of the *Payne Sentinel,* and president of the senior class. The class asked me to select for them the class color, flower, and motto and to compose the class song. After praying over the matter, I made the following selection: —

Class color: steel-gray.
Class flower: carnation.
Class motto: "Serve as you go."
Class song: We have started to-day on life's journey,
Alone on the highway of life, etc.

I presented these to the class. They were well received and accepted.

On Easter Sunday I was on the program to read an essay, the subject of which was "The Value of the Bible." The reading of this essay made a good impression, and the audience requested that it be published. I had the essay printed in pamphlet form, and it sold rapidly around Selma. I gave the proceeds to the school.

My work was so strenuous that year that I had a nervous breakdown just a few weeks before commencement. I had to deliver my graduation oration while seated.

June 1, 1909, is a day I shall never forget. It was the day of my graduation. Long before ten o'clock in the morning the eager audience had filled the chapel. There were five in my class, and we all spoke. The names of the graduates, together with the titles of their essays, were as follows: —

Mr. E. L. Henderson, "The Ideal Man." — Salutatorian.
Miss Martha O. Brown, "The Battle of Life."
Miss Viola Mae Young (my sister), "Labor Conquers."
Mr. Chas. Hooks, "The Young Afro-American."

I was the last one to speak, being the valedictorian. My subject was, "Serve the People." It was as follows: —

Serve the People.

There rests upon mankind a moral obligation, the highest law, by which they are mutually bound to aid each other. This is the highest conception of duty both to God and man.

The demand of the civilized world has ever been for efficient service, and the man who has learned the art of serving is the man who will succeed best in life.

It is by this philosophy one creates his own atmosphere and makes his life yield its best and rarest fruits. Every vocation in life implies service. Those who are aspiring to high positions should seek to become the servant of all. So let us come to the rescue of the people and seek

to introduce new methods, by which they can better their condition and thereby become public benefactors.

The talent we possess is for the service of all. The truth we hold is the truth of all mankind. Truth has been the same in all ages and is the common property of all mankind. Human estimates of truth may change, but truth itself is invariable. Truth is the written Word of God. It should be a guiding principle in our lives. It should mold our characters and shape our destinies.

The work of life is placed before us. The best service only can accomplish satisfactorily the duties that now await us. The men and women whom we delight to honor are those who spent their lives in the service of others. The altruistic spirits buried the thought of themselves in their ambition to benefit others.

"He that is greatest among you shall be your servant," is the language of the Great Teacher. To serve is regarded as a divine privilege as well as a duty by every right-minded man. Do something worthy for mankind, is the cry of the civilized world. Give light to those who are in darkness; sustain the weak and faltering; befriend and aid the poor and needy.

It was the service of the learned men that made Greece renowned for her great knowledge in science, art, and literature. It was the service of George Washington that repelled the forces of England and saved America in her infancy.

The people want men and women as leaders who will improve their condition. If we want the people to serve us, we must first be willing to serve the people.

As we go from these university halls into the battle of life, where our work is to be done and our places among men to be decided, we should go in the spirit of service, with a determination to do all in our power to uplift humanity.

One of the truest friends of humanity to-day in the secular world is Andrew Carnegie, the great Iron King, who has retired from active business and is now distributing his wealth for the benefit of others through the establishment of circulating libraries and endowments for schools.

Abraham Lincoln, whose praises are sung by millions to-day, recognized the fact that he could perform a service to four million slaves and his country by issuing the Emancipation Proclamation. He possessed the moral courage to strike off the shackles of those held in bondage and declared them free.

The founders of this university have rendered an immeasurable service by providing an excellent school in which the colored youth can prepare itself for the great work of life.

We must carry to others the blessings which we have received here. The purpose of education is not personal enjoyment. It is a preparation for the most efficient service. It sends us out to do something for the masses.

The people are looking to us for strength and help. They need our best efforts, our bravest words, our noblest deeds, our tenderest love, and our most helpful sympathy. This is a needy world; outstretched hands may be seen by the thousands asking for aid. It is our duty to relieve human wants. Let us place our standard high, but be willing to do the lowest task, the most distasteful labor, be ever helpful and generous, and be ready to lend a helping hand.

W. H. Taft, the President of the United States, has recently taken his oath to serve eighty million people. It is the good and faithful service of the president of this university and his loyal colaborers that has won a reputation for our institution, of which we are justly proud.

It was the valuable service of self-sacrificing trustees given to the educational department of our Church in this State that has opened a fountain of knowledge for the colored youth of my race. Good service is an unfailing guide to success. One of the grandest mottoes in the universities to-day is, "Better to serve than be served."

There is nothing more reputable to a race or nation than Christian service. So let us not hesitate, but grasp every opportunity that will enable us to do some good for others. As teachers, teach the people; as merchants, supply their needs; as doctors, administer to their wants; and as preachers, proclaim the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It makes no difference how circumscribed opportunities may be, show yourself a friend to those who feel themselves friendless. Do not sit with idle hands, but take up the first task that offers itself to do — work in the field, at the desk, at the washtub, tending to customers behind the counter, or whatever it might be, and be faithful in the task at hand.

There is no greatness in material things of themselves. The greatness is determined by the use of them. When we go out into the world and offer our service to the people, we must give to the world something that we feel mankind needs. Cast your bread upon the waters, and you will find it many days hence.

Valedictory.

Trustees: Honorable Bishop and Gentlemen of the Board of Trustees: We know you have been guarding the material interests of this university, spent your money, offered your prayers, pleaded our cause to the public, and denied yourselves for our comfort. We are your debtors, and wherever our lot is cast, your banner shall not trail in the dust. Honorable sirs, farewell!

Dear President: To you, in behalf of the graduating class, I bring our heartfelt thanks for the great care you have taken of our welfare. We appreciate your kind interest, your courtesy, and your best wishes for our future success. You have taught us lessons of morals which will abide with us throughout life, and in behalf of the graduating class of 1909 I bid you a regretful farewell.

Members of the Faculty: The time has come for us to bid you farewell. You have been given the task of impressing upon our minds the truths that will develop us into useful men and women and of implanting the germ of knowledge in our brains and hearts that will grow to form a successful life. You have instilled the spirit of originality in our lives. You have formed in us the habit of study. You have grieved when we failed to manifest the proper interest. You have faithfully discharged your duties. We tremble as we leave you; for here we relied upon your wisdom and guidance and sought your counsel and assistance, which you were ever able and willing to give. Now we must go forth to battle with life alone. We trust you will not cease to pray for our success. We halt as we say, "Farewell!"

Undergraduates: To-day we leave you. We leave the old university in your care; you are to walk these halls and paths after we have wandered away. You will make these halls and this campus ring with cheers of gladness and glee in which our voices have so often mingled. But you will have many little incidents in the classroom and on the campus, such as we have often had. We shall feel lonely when we think of you, but our hearts are still with you, even if we must bid you good-by.

Classmates: We are all standing together for the last time. We have formed an unrivaled friendship, which, I hope, will continue throughout life. We have read to the end of the long chapter of our beloved Payne Uni-

versity. Our farewell must now be spoken. We knew this time would come. In imagination we tried to place it a far way off. We wish we should not have to say good-by, but the time has come and, oh! it seems to be such a strange word to us, who have daily met one another. We are nearer to one another to-day than ever before. Now we must ever face the responsibilities of life. We have no president to rely upon, no dean to solve our difficult problems in life, no teachers to direct the course of our thoughts. We must make our mark or fail. Our path will not be easy all the way; our service will not be appreciated by all. We shall not stumble into greatness, nor will it be thrust upon us. If we would win, we must work, watch, and wait. We may be criticized, but that should not make us feel dismayed. Victory will surely come to him who works, watches, and waits. Wherever you stand, let it always be said, "This is a worthy representative of Payne University." Let us continue to pray, study, and perform the duties that will reflect credit upon our home, school, church, and race.

Honorable Bishop, dear Trustees, President, Faculty, Schoolmates, Friends, and Classmates, I bid you one and all a tender and a final farewell.

While I was delivering the above valedictory oration, the entire audience, from the bishop down, wept, except the president and myself.

When I had ended my speech, Prof. W. H. Bowen came forward and delivered the commencement address, after which Bishop H. B. Parks presented the diplomas. He made a short speech, of which I have kept a few words to this day. He cautioned us to beware of three men whom we would be sure to meet on life's journey: 1) the selfish man, who thinks only of himself; 2) the complainer, one who always finds fault; 3) the idler, the lazy man.

He referred to the three different spirits as three different men — the selfish spirit, the complaining spirit, the idle spirit. He cautioned and warned us not to tolerate such spirits; for if we did, we should meet with no success in life.

Having made a permanent note in my heart of what he said, I reached forth and received my diploma from the hands of Bishop Parks.

The class song was then sung, and our friends came forward and presented to us many useful gifts, wearing-apparel, etc., and extended their congratulations to us.

Thus ended my school-life at Payne University.

"Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart. Wait, I say, on the Lord." Ps. 27, 14.

Chapter 4. How the First Few Years after Graduation were Spent.

All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive. — *Matt. 21, 22.*

The morning after my graduation, June 2, 1909, I left Selma for my old home in the country at Rosebud and arrived there late in the afternoon.

Having just finished school, I was young and active and had an ambition to work for the Lord and my race. I was ready to serve. I had great enthusiasm to serve the common people; my heart was overwhelmed with compassion for them. This sympathy for the common people has remained with me throughout life; for the greater portion of my work in life has been among the common people in the rural districts.

I have told you in a previous part of this little volume that from childhood I desired to be a schoolteacher. Now the time had come for me to begin my life-work. This

inclination I began to feel very keenly: "Go where you are most needed and do something for the masses."

At that time there were in this part of the country some very peculiar local laws pertaining to the public schools in certain districts. One was that, if the colored people failed to have a public school for any one scholastic year, the public-school money would be returned to the county and be given to the support of the white schools.

Most of the so-called public-school teachers were not able to pass the State examination and secure a State certificate. On that account there were a number of vacant schools every year in nearly every county. Worse than that, in some counties the colored people had no public school at all, no funds having been appropriated for the training of the little colored children.

I resolved to render some service to my race by teaching for them each year in as many of these vacant schools as I could and thus help them retain the small public fund that had been set aside for the colored youth.

On June 5, 1909, I went to a place called Piny Woods and held a school-meeting. In this meeting I offered my services to teach a summer-school for four months, beginning June 7. To this they all gladly and willingly agreed.

To my surprise, when I returned to open the school on June 7, I met with a very unpleasant experience. Not a child was to be seen, and the door was locked. I could not afford to let this little obstacle discourage me, for I realized that, as I went on through life, I should see greater discouragements.

I put my books, etc., on the church steps and went over to the deacon's home to inquire why he had locked the door against me. When I reached the house, his wife told me that he was in the field. I took his little seven-year-old girl along to the place where he was plowing and addressed him kindly, politely, and cheerfully. Then I asked him

why he had locked the door and where the key was. At first the deacon seemed to be at his wit's end; he stared at me with a big question-mark, as it were, on his face. After a few moments he tried to speak and make a frivolous excuse, "The people, — they, — the people, they —"

Right then and there I formed the conclusion that the average colored people do not know what is best for them, nor do they know what they want, and the thing to do is to do whatever is best for the people, whether you receive thanks for it or not, as long as you do not take advantage of them or oppress them.

With the above conclusion formed in my mind, I said to the deacon kindly, "Brother, give me the church key." This he did at once. I then asked him to give me the little girl for the summer school, as she was too small to do anything on the farm. He answered, "I have no objections."

So with the key in my hand, the little girl at my side, and a prayer in my heart, I hastened back to the little church in which I was to teach the school. When I approached the church-yard, I saw a woman with a little boy leaving the grounds. I called to her, "Wait, lady! Why are you leaving?" She began to mutter, "'Caze de do' are locked, an um gying to care me boy back ham."

"O no," I exclaimed, "don't do that! I have the key. Give me this little boy for the summer-school; I shall take good care of him." These soft words won the confidence of the old lady at once. She smiled and handed me the little boy's dirty book-sack and the bucket, with his dinner in it.

After sweeping the church and dusting the benches, I was ready to begin school. With a plantation song, the Lord's Prayer, and those two destitute little colored children I began my life-work at Piny Woods in a little Baptist church called "Coonslide." Why those people named

their church thus I do not know; I can only say that it was wholly due to ignorance.

In spite of the small beginning my work in Piny Woods was pleasant and successful. Day after day I prayed for a good school, and the Lord granted me success. The enrolment reached forty-five. The children advanced in their studies and made good progress along secular lines. I taught them the Lord's Prayer and some Bible-verses. No one instructed me to do this, but I just reasoned within myself that I would see to it that each one of my charges should learn the Lord's Prayer and some Bible-verses.

Besides teaching the school in Piny Woods that year I did some more work for the Methodist Church. I served as the secretary of the Camden District Sunday-school Convention. I was reelected to this office for four consecutive years. I served as Sunday-school teacher and also conducted a sort of mission society in the Rosebud Methodist Church, where I was baptized.

We closed the summer school in Piny Woods the last week in September, and without a week's vacation I went right on to open the fall school in Pine Grove, Autauga Co., the first Monday in October.

While carrying on my work in Pine Grove, I ever remembered the old way that led me to success, namely, prayer. I prayed daily for the children who were committed to my charge. The Lord sent the increase. The enrolment reached fifty, and the children advanced rapidly, to the perfect satisfaction of all concerned.

The Lord has always given me white friends. There lived near the school a very fine white family which believed in the education of the colored people, Mr. White Jones and his wife. This family assisted me in building a schoolhouse for the colored people in that place. Mrs. Jones would often visit the school and address my literary society. She would also supply this society with

suitable pieces, which she would clip from her magazines. She showed herself to be a staunch friend of mine in every way.

I closed the Pine Grove school the latter part of 1910 and resumed the school-work in Piny Woods the first Monday in February. That spring the school was a decided success. The enrolment reached something over a hundred — I do not remember the exact number. As I had no assistant teacher, it was a difficult task for me to keep all the pupils interested and see that they made good progress in their studies; but by diligent prayer, careful study, and thorough preparation for each day's work I ended the school-term successfully. I made an attempt to build a decent schoolhouse there for the people, but because of their ignorance I could not prevail upon them to assist me in my efforts, and so I closed the school on the last day of May.

I was now asked to teach the summer-school for my home people at Rosebud. Without a week's vacation I began the school the first Monday in June and taught the next four months. Most of the parents and even many of the children knew me from girlhood and seemed to have the greatest confidence in me and respected me, and they did everything in their power to make it pleasant and agreeable for me.

Besides my school-work I did some more church-work for the people. I was elected president of the Woman's Home and Foreign Missions Society. I taught school daily, visited different churches, and organized mission societies among the women to raise money for the support of their missions here in America and in Africa.

At the close of the summer-school at Rosebud in September I was called to Fulton in Clarke County and began teaching the first Monday in October, 1910. I had not been in Fulton a month when I received two appointments,

one from the president of the Connectional Preachers' Aid, an organization in the A. M. E. Church, a kind of insurance, with headquarters at Nashville, Tenn., and the other from the president of the A. M. E. Book Concern, whose headquarters are at Philadelphia.

In the performance of the duties of the above-named appointments I was to fill the office of two of the general officers by proxy. Being ready to serve, I accepted the two appointments, hired a teacher in my place, and took up the new work. I visited the four annual conferences that were held in the State that year at Ensley City, Mobile, Eufaula, and Union Springs. It was through this service rendered the A. M. E. Church that I won a four years' scholarship to Wilberforce University at Wilberforce, O. But because I feared that the cold climate would cause the return of the rheumatism from which I had suffered in my youth, Bishop H. B. Parks advised me to forego this privilege. This I did and, after submitting my resignation, returned to Fulton, resuming my work as public-school teacher.

Soon after I had taken up my work at Fulton again, I received a big inducement from the headquarters at Nashville, Tenn., to give up teaching altogether and go to Texas as State Superintendent of the Connectional Preachers' Aid. Before taking a definite step in this matter, I consulted with Bishop Parks. He said to me: "I thought you told me you wanted to be a teacher. Teaching school is a broad field for you to work in." Thus he reminded me of my first desire to take up the calling of teaching school.

When I left Fulton, I went to Mulberry, Autauga Co., and taught a four months' school during the spring of 1911. In the summer of that year I taught my home school again. That fall I was elected the lady principal in the Fairview Industrial School at Dothan,

Houston Co., Ala. I went to Dothan and served until that Christmas; but owing to the base deportment of the principal of the school with the girls I resigned a few days before we closed for the holidays and left for home.

On my way from Dothan to Rosebud I met a gentleman on the train, one R. J. Davis. He asked me to go to Nichburg, Conecuh Co., and teach the spring school. I accepted this call, and immediately after the holidays I went to Nichburg and began my work in that school. It was here that I conceived the idea of building a school concerning which you will read in another part of this volume.

I believe in a thorough preparation for teaching. While I was doing all this church- and public-school work, I was steadily trying to prepare myself for more efficient service by taking a correspondence course. I reviewed all my high-school and normal subjects, and for my own benefit I thought I would take the State examination once or twice every year. During the past years I passed the third-grade State examination seven times and the second-grade State examination four times.

All glory and honor for what I accomplished in those first few years after graduation I give to Jesus; for it was His guiding hand that gave me strength to do all this work of teaching one school after another without a month's vacation. He had taken me through several years of schooling at Payne University, where I obtained a fair secular education, and now He was enabling and allowing me to go from place to place and do this work in order to secure experience in dealing with people, gain the confidence of the common people, and obtain a broader knowledge of their condition and their needs, with the object in view of using the talent which He had given me to work for His kingdom and of carrying out His command: "Go, work in My vineyard."

Chapter 5. What Induced Me to Build a School in the Rural District.

For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth and gross darkness the people. — *Is. 60, 2.*

It was not the thought of money that induced me to be willing to assume the heavy burden, the weighty responsibility, and the binding obligation to buy land, erect a building, and operate a school for the benefit of my race. There was no money appropriated or set aside in any form for the support of such a difficult task or great and expensive undertaking. There was no outside source to draw on, no board, no organization, no philanthropist backing it, not even the promise of as much as one penny from a single individual. The whole situation depended on me. To start with, I was to be the board, the bank, and the organization.

Now, what did I have? Nothing. I was no wealthy woman possessing great riches, owning a number of investments producing large incomes. I had the pitiful sum of two hundred dollars, my own personal money, the sum I had saved above my personal use besides what I had to give my parents to help them along with the support of my younger brothers and sisters. What was that meager sum, all my little living, against such an expensive undertaking? And yet I was willing to give it, and gave it gladly, for the benefit and uplift of my destitute race and for the spreading of Christ's kingdom.

I did not give the two hundred dollars, all my little living, from any selfish or vainglorious motive. It was not for praise, glory, or honor. From the time I received my diploma and went forth from the university halls into the battle of life, it had ever been my desire to serve the common, destitute people. I was always ready to serve under any and all conditions. My highest ambition is to serve, to be a faithful servant of God and my people.

I would rather serve than be served. I have never desired a high position. I would rather do the humble work among the despised and outcast.

What, then, induced me to shoulder such great responsibility, to start out with no fund on which to draw, to face friend and foe and announce that I was going to build a school for the benefit of my race, the humble, the poor, the despised, the rejected, the downtrodden, the little outcast colored children in the dark sections of the rural districts throughout the Black Belt?

I will enumerate my reasons as follows: —

1. I saw the vile and grievous condition of my race, of my brothers and sisters. It was a pathetic sight. Ignorance and superstition in all matters prevailed beyond measure; indeed, the ignorance and superstition among the people were amazing.

2. Morals and manners were at a low ebb. It was a rare thing to see a man who did not have two or more wives or to see a woman who had only one husband. It was a common thing to see a young girl in her teens, approaching the age of twenty, who was a mother and was drifting about with no husband. It was a common sight to see young men and boys strolling along the highways with banjos strung from their necks and shoulders — both young and old had lost all regard for the holy estate of matrimony. It was no longer considered a holy or divine ordinance. There were hundreds of people who had been married, but were separated. It was a common thing to see girls or women living by themselves in little huts dotted over the plantations. Young girls would often bundle their clothes, move out from their father's home, away from the care and protection of a loving mother, and start keeping house by themselves.

The reputation of some of these people was shameful. Their manners in all places, at home, in church, on the

roadsides, in public places, such as stores and railroad stations, was rough, uncouth, boisterous. Even their word of honor was of no account.

Their manner of dressing was embarrassing to behold. Only a few grown-up people wore shoes. Most of them went barefoot. The men wore their trousers rolled half way up their limbs or to their knees. The women wore their dresses tied half-way up their limbs, with a long string around their waists. They dressed their hair by wrapping it with white, red, or black strings.

3. The third reason why I desired to build a school was because of the condition of the homes. The homes in which these poor people lived were horrible. In every community there were two classes of people, the Big-dogs and the Little-dogs. Of course, in the homes of the so-called Big-dogs conditions were a little more decent. In the homes of the so-called Little-dogs, conditions, upon the whole, were indecent. There were no arrangements made for bathing or ventilation in the houses. In most of them there was too much ventilation. While sitting in the house behind closed doors, one could look up and see the sky, the moon, and the stars through the holes in the roof; one could look down and through the holes in the floor see the ground — chickens, hogs, little pigs, and dogs. One could seldom find a decent pair of steps at a door. The chimneys were made of sticks daubed with red mud and reached only half-way up the houses. On a cold day it might happen that the wind would blow down the chimney, and the smoke would prevent the family from having a fire.

In many cases the whole family, half-grown young men and women, smaller children, and father and mother, had to sleep and cook in the same room. The bed-clothing was filthy; almost all the members of the family would sleep in the clothes they had worn during the day. The dishes

and cooking-utensils remained unwashed from meal to meal, day after day. The bed-clothes, dishes, and cooking-utensils were covered with swarms of flies. Scarcely any lamps could be found in the homes, and in most cases where there were lamps they had no chimneys.

There were no dinner-tables on which to serve when the dinner was prepared. The good old mother gave each member of the family his or her dinner on a plate, pan, bucket, or skillet. Some would sit in the doorway, some on the steps, others out in the yard, and the little children on the floor. All ate with their hands and fingers.

Lunch at School.

The buckets contain a sweet potato or a corn-pone

They used gourds for dippers, broom-sage and pine-tops for brooms. A few chairs, boxes, blocks, wagon-body seats, on the floor, were used for seats. The floors were seldom, if ever, scrubbed and not often swept. About the yard lay all kinds of filthy rags, inviting pestilence and disease.

4. The children, the dear little children of the rural districts, whom I love so well and in whom I am so interested, were in a sad condition. They were pitiful sights; some of them had to come to school partly dressed in adults' clothing. In the dead of winter some of them

would have to come to my school with only one or two pieces of clothing on as a protection against the stings and howls of the winter winds, half hungry, half naked, barefooted, toes and heels cracked open from the rain, ice, and frost. Their little heads looked horrible. The little girls' hair was combed only once in a while. It was knotty, kinky, dirty, matted, and full of cockleburs. The boys, poor things, their hair was never combed. Once in a while some members of the family would take a pair of scissors and cut the boys' hair, which was so gummy and matted that the hair cut off would come off in a caplike form. In many cases there were hog-lice in the little boys' hair. On their hands, wrists, forearms, in the back of their necks, on their kneecaps, on the front part of their legs, on their ankles, heels, feet, and toes, grew banks of dirt until it formed a scaly crust, so thick that you could take a pin and stick deep or scrape hard, and the poor little things would not feel it. The finger- and toe-nails were long and dirty. They ate with their little hands all the time. Their teeth were yellow with stain. The best they knew to do was to steal, lie, curse, swear, and fight like cats and dogs.

5. The educational advantages offered these children by the State were entirely inadequate. The school-terms lasted only three or four months a year. Before the children could get a good start in school, the term would be over. During the long vacation of eight or nine months the children would forget most, if not all, of what they had learned during the previous term before the time came for the reopening of the school.

6. Among the poor little, destitute children of whom I write there were some bright boys and girls, filled with high ambitions, with the marks of leadership on their dusky brows, which shone like diamonds in a coal-bed in the bright sun. Their poor parents were unable to send them

to school. They had nothing with which to pay their board; they were just barely existing themselves.

However, most of the children were dull and backward. There were large boys and girls said to be in the fifth, sixth, and seventh grades who could not read a paragraph through correctly. If they were asked to spell a simple word, for instance, the word "smooth," they would be liable to begin to spell it with a *p* or a *q*. There were large children who could not write the letters of the

An Alabama School, Buena Vista.
Our mission bought this building for $25 and in it began the work of saving souls

alphabet or do primary work in arithmetic. They would not have the slightest idea of how to solve the simplest problem. Some ten- and fifteen-year-old boys and girls could not read the first lesson on the chart or in the primer.

7. As a general thing, there were no schoolhouses; for the most part the public schools were taught in the churches. Most of the churches were dilapidated and so exposed to the elements that one might as well teach outdoors under an oak-tree. There were big holes in the roofs and in the floors. Many a time during a heavy shower of

rain the large children would have to hold an umbrella over me while I heard a class recite.

In some of those churches there were small heaters, but no flues; so we had to take out a window pane and run the stovepipe out through the side of the wall. When the wind was high on a cold day, the smoke would turn us all away from the fire. In churches where there were no heaters we were obliged to build big fires outdoors. Then I would have to watch the little fellows to prevent their clothes from catching fire, for many of them were patched like little rag-men. All kinds of patches and all kinds of thread were used on the same garment.

The blackboards were made of rough planks and dyed with ink. Each child would bring an egg or a penny for a piece of crayon. Each child had to go to the woods and bring armfuls of wood for the fire. The children drank water out of their dinner buckets or the tops. We used broom-sage straw and pine-tops for brooms to sweep the floors.

8. The poor people were lacking in leadership. It is one of the great needs of the colored race even to this day to have sufficient and efficient leaders. The number of able, prepared leaders is so small in proportion to the vast number of worthless leaders that not much real work can be done very rapidly.

The public-school teachers were inefficient. Not more than one-third of them could pass a third-grade state examination fairly well. Some of them did not have the least idea of how to grade a school. They would permit children to enter the sixth and seventh grades that should have been in the third. Discipline in the school was unknown. Before one reached the school-building or church where the school was being held, one could hear the children giggling, murmuring, and shuffling their feet. There was a continual commotion during the school-hours. The

teachers would ask the children questions about their lessons and have to look in the book to see if the child answered correctly.

These teachers would permit the children to sing all kinds of songs and give some of the most ridiculous recitations. The public-school teachers would sometimes have Christmas-trees and present Christmas programs. The following are some of the recitations the children would recite. A little ashy-faced country lad comes forward, so happy that he has a chance to speak that his face is wreathed in smiles. He recites as follows: —

> Black gum bits and bullet rains,
> White oak saddle and hickory horse,
> Um gwine to ride all up and down the line.

At this all the people would just whoop, hollo, and laugh. Then another child would come forward and give his Christmas selection: —

> Milk in the pitcher and butter in the bowl;
> I cannot get a sweetheart to save my soul.

Then another would step forward and recite: —

> With a jug of molasses and a pan of biscuits in my hand,
> I'll sop my way to the Promised Land.

Now, such recitations were given on the solemn occasion of the commemoration of the birth of Jesus, the Savior of the world. Gross darkness covered the people.

The so-called preachers, with a few exceptions, were worse than those to whom they preached. They were both ignorant and immoral. It seemed to be their ambition to destroy the morals of the very brightest women and girls in every community over which they presided. The better class of laymen could not trust them in their homes during their absence. These big so-called sectarian preachers have been the downfall of many poor, ignorant, young girls. They have destroyed the peace and harmony in many a humble country home.

The majority of those big so-called preachers were regular whisky heads. It was a common thing to see a big leader at one of those annual meetings just out of the pulpit staggering down some dark alley, drunk with wine, beer, "shinny," or whisky, heaving like a dog, while the other preachers looked upon it as a joke. Besides this, those preachers were greedy for money. They would rove the rural districts, holding out false inducements to the poor, ignorant people, enticing them to join all kinds of fraternal societies that lead hellward. They would offer the people sick-, accident-, and death-benefits, and every other kind of benefit, just to get their money. The poor, ignorant people could not resist the temptation. Those who had credit would go to their landlords and borrow the money to join. The other people would sell their corn, eggs, pigs, chickens, the very food out of the mouths of their little children, to obtain money with which to join these societies. After they had stripped the people of all the money they could get, these scoundrels would escape and no more would be heard from them, while the people were left in need as before.

They would impose heavy taxation, or assessment, upon the church people, and if those who were thus taxed, failed to pay, they were excommunicated, or their names were put on the dead list. A person whose name was on the dead list was not permitted to partake of the Lord's Supper. If he became sick, no pastor visited him, and if he died, no pastor would bury him or preach the funeral sermon. Some of these preachers would hire out to the people to preach so many sermons a year or month for so much money. Visiting the sick and burying the dead was not included. A baptism was performed for twenty-five cents and up per head. When a member died, the funeral was used as an occasion to draw a large crowd in order to get a lot of money.

These preachers would not humble themselves, or feel enough interest in the people, to live in the parsonages the people had provided for them. The homes these poor people had strained themselves to build for them they allowed to go to ruin and flocked to the cities, hanging around the streets in the towns during the week. On Saturdays they would go out to their country churches, do their kind of preaching, get all the money, chickens, eggs, etc., they could from the people and on Monday mornings board the train for the city with these gifts, joking about the people, calling them "niggers," and saying, "I told them niggers so and so." Instead of trying to enlighten the people, they were calling them fools.

9. I always believed in the education of the heart; for a bright head with a wicked heart stands for naught. It only tends to breed trouble. I knew something was wrong with the kind of religion my people had, but I did not know what was wrong about it. I desired a better Christian training for myself and my people, but I did not know where to find it. The religion of my people was a mere pretense, a kind of manufactured religion. Those who belonged to church were no better than those who did not. In most of the homes the so-called Christian families as well as the unbelievers lived in envy, strife, malice, prejudice, bitter hatred, yea, hellish riot; in covetousness; in adultery and fornication; in theft and lying.

In hundreds of homes the Bible was never read, a prayer was never spoken, and a Christian hymn was never sung. The whole family lay down at night and rose the next morning, and each went out to do his work like the beast of the field, without saying a word of thanks to God. Sin was looked upon by most people as a small thing. They did not fear to sin; to them sin was nothing. They held divine services in their churches twelve times a year, on the average once a month. No one took the

time to teach them Christian hymns; they sang old plantation songs during their services, such as the following: —

Drinking the wine, O wine,
Drinking the wine to heal my soul.
Good Lord, I ought to been da ten thousand years
Drinking the wine.

Another: —

Heavy load, heavy load, heavy load, heavy load;
Um gyng to lay down dis heavy load.
The devil is a lie and a conjure, too,
Um gyng to lay down dis heavy load;
And if you don't mind, he will conjure you,
Um gyng to lay down dis heavy load,

My load so heavy I can't get along,
Um gyng to lay down dis heavy load.
The devil wear dem iron shoes,
Um gyng to lay down dis heavy load.
If you don't look out, he will slip dem on you,
Um gyng to lay down my heavy load.

Now, if a Christian hymn was lined out, not ten in the whole congregation could sing the words. For instance, suppose the following hymn were lined out: "Alas! and did my Savior bleed," etc., all in the congregation would start singing at the top of their voices, just as loud as they could sing; but instead of singing the words of the hymn, the poor, ignorant people would be singing as follows: "Dey hey mey sey, ley hey dey sey, hey mey fey sey, hey hey." Their preachers never took the time to see if the people were singing the words given out to them or not.

Both men and women would get down on their knees and pray just as loud as they could hollo, using all kinds of profane language and blasphemy. They would call on God as if He were asleep or dead. The preachers would read a text and then branch off and preach all kinds of man-made doctrines, telling the people that these things are in the Bible. Many a time the name of Jesus was not mentioned during a whole sermon. The preachers

would whoop, hollo, pat, and stamp, snort, and blow until the people were in an uproar, shouting and holloing, too. Then the preachers would just say anything. I once heard a preacher laughing and telling how he curses when he gets "niggers" to shouting and holloing.

The people were obliged to carry on most of the church-work without the preachers; they just came and preached. The people would have Sunday-school about three months out of the year, beginning a few Sundays before Easter each year and continuing until July or August.

The people had the wrong conception of Christmas altogether, considering it a time of great rejoicing; but they had the wrong kind of joy. They held frolics, dances, horse races, shooting-matches, with gambling, fighting, drinking, cursing, and swearing. There were rough times at Christmas. For meek people it was advisable to remain indoors, for it was dangerous even to walk out in one's yard for fear of being shot down by rough passers-by. At Christmas time all the little children were given whisky to drink; the old folks said it was to get their blood hot.

On Easter also the people held celebrations, but only a few knew why Easter is celebrated. They would use any kind of songs or recitations. Some of the Easter songs were: "Home, Sweet Home," "Ding Dong, Sweet Bell, Ding Dong," etc. The recitations were such as: "The Village Smith," "The Farmer Boy," etc. Many a time on Easter the name of Jesus was not mentioned. — Gross darkness had covered the people. Is. 60, 2.

10. The teaching of the Bible, of the Six Chief Parts of the Christian religion. But I cannot say that this was one of my reasons for wanting to build a school for my race, for in this respect I was in the dark myself. Sad! Sad! We were all blind and leaders of the blind. We did not know the Bible, neither did the preachers know it.

We did not know what we must do to be saved, neither did the preachers. They were preaching false doctrine, and we did not know it. We did not know that Jesus has done all that is necessary for our salvation, and the preachers did not know it. We did not know what Jesus, the Savior, meant to us. We did not know that we were sinners. We wanted to go to heaven; but we did not know the way, and the preachers did not know it. We were trying to work our way to heaven, and the preachers were doing the same. We were not following our Bibles, neither were the preachers.

Now, what was to be done? Our white people had given us our schools and churches. We sent calls and had our leaders; and I presume the white people thought we were getting along fine.

The Lord, our Savior, who loved us saw all this and had compassion on us. He saw that the sad plight of our immortal souls was far worse than our physical condition. The Lord looked down from heaven upon us. He saw this hellward-leading teaching, this man-made doctrine of salvation by works. He saw darkness had covered our land. Our eyes were blind to the knowledge contained in His blessed Gospel. The Lord saw that we were all on the wrong road, regardless of how well we meant, and could never reach heaven that way.

God saw that I was concerned, that I was worried, about many things pertaining to the temporal welfare of my people. God saw my eager desires and longings to do something for Him and my race. I did not have the least idea of what was to be done. I could not preach, for women are not allowed to preach. But the Lord instilled in me the thought of building a school, gave me strength to begin this work, and sustained me.

The Lord's ways are past finding out. It was His

will to take the school I built and use it to put His Lutheran Church in the Black Belt to enlighten His people. At that time I knew nothing about the Lutheran Church and its pure Gospel-preaching; but God knew all about it and was pleased with it. God was going to use my school as an instrument to put the true Church in this dark land. The Lord did send us the light through the Lutheran Church, of which you will read later.

Chapter 6. How I Began the Work at Rosebud.

I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go. I will guide thee with Mine eye. — *Ps. 32, 8.*

One day at recess, a few weeks before I closed the school at Nichburg, Conecuh Co., Ala., in the spring of 1912, I was out in the yard watching the poor little half-clad children of my race playing baseball. While looking on, I seated myself beside the root of a large old field pine-tree in the school-yard which the children had whitewashed several feet up with a kind of soil they called soap-stone.

While sitting there, my mind wandered back to the many sad scenes I had witnessed in various sections of the rural districts during the past few years of service among my race. As I sat there thinking of those scenes, the thought came to my mind to build a large school in the country which would give the little country children a longer school term; to run the school on a cheap basis that would enable the poorest boys and girls endowed with bright intellects, but not able to defray their expenses in other schools to obtain a higher education; to establish a school that would give the youth of my race a real, true, threefold education: of the head, the hand, and the heart.

That evening when I returned to my boarding-place, seated by the fire and gazing into the red coals of the fireplace, I talked to God in my heart a long time over the school proposition. When I retired, I prayed myself to sleep over it.

After a few days had passed, I spoke of it to the people with whom I boarded. The news that Miss Rosa was going to build a high school soon spread abroad throughout the community. I had several meetings with the school patrons at the schoolhouse, where we discussed the matter thoroughly; but I did not give them a definite answer in regard to the location of the school. I was undecided as to whether or not Nichburg was the proper place for such a school, as it was located so far from the railroad.

Day after day passed by, and I kept on trying to think of the best place to locate a school for the benefit of the destitute, common people. I thought I would write and consult my parents about it. This I did at once. I wrote my father that I was going to build a school somewhere in the rural district, but that I had not decided on the location as yet. During the course of a conversation with one Mr. S. E. Ramsey, who lived in Rosebud at that time, my father told him about the contents of the letter he had received from me.

Mr. Ramsey told father to write me that I should build the school at Rosebud, that I should come home and build up there; the people at home would do just as much for my school as any other people elsewhere. My father sent me this message. Somehow I readily accepted Mr. Ramsey's invitation and concluded to build the school at Rosebud, my native place. Soon after this I closed the spring school at Nichburg, packed my trunk, bade the good people farewell, and returned to my home at Rosebud.

The first day at home I talked over the school matter

with my parents. The next day I sent for Mr. Ramsey. He came to see me that evening, and we had a heart-to-heart talk over the school proposition. Mr. Ramsey pledged his word of honor to stand by me in my undertaking. We decided to hold a school meeting the following Sunday after Sunday-school, when I was to present my school proposition to the public. I appointed Mr. Ramsey as a committee of one to notify the people of the meeting and to invite them all to come. Mr. Ramsey was a good and faithful man, true to his friends, and reliable in all his business transactions with me.

After this conference with Brother Ramsey I decided that the next thing in order was to secure the good will and approval of all the white people in the community before presenting my proposition to the colored people, for I said to myself, "This is the white people's country." There was Mr. J. Lee Bonner, the leading white man in Rosebud, who is widely known in our Lutheran Church down here to-day. Mr. Bonner and his family, of whom you will read more as we continue with this story, are exceptional white people, refined and well educated, sincere Christians, who believe in a Christian education for all.

With a prayer in my heart, I seated myself at the table, uncovered my typewriter, and commenced writing a letter to Mr. Bonner. I began this letter on that Monday night after Ramsey had gone. It took me until Friday to complete it. I wished to make every point pertaining to my school proposition perfectly clear, in order to gain the good will and approval of this distinguished family, which meant so much to my work. So day after day, night after night, I prayed, wrote, and rewrote. There was no one to guide, instruct, or teach me just what to say except the Lord. The Lord tells us in His Word, "I will instruct thee, I will teach thee." It was the Lord who endowed me with suf-

ficient knowledge and wisdom to compose this letter. I prayed and struggled over my letter until at last on that Friday night I completed it to my satisfaction. The next morning I read over the letter, sealed it, and sent it by my father to Mr. Bonner, at the Bonner store. I remained at home anxiously awaiting Mr. Bonner's reply.

Mr. and Mrs. J. Lee Bonner and Daughter, Rosebud, Ala.

The Lord was surely in the plan; for my father says that Mr. Bonner received the letter kindly and read it over four or five times before he said anything. Then he looked up and said: "Tell Miss Rosa for me that, if she can do anything to help her race, she can have not only my approval, but also my money." As he continued speaking, his face flushed with excitement: "Your race, the colored people, is an outcast, despised, and downtrodden

race." Papa says that he talked to this effect until the tears came to his eyes. God bless Mr. Bonner and his family!

When I heard all this, my heart leaped for joy. I knew the Lord was in the plan. Stealing away from the rest of the family, I bowed down in prayer behind a big tree in gratitude to God for giving me such a strong friend among the white race.

The Lord was guiding and instructing me what to do and which steps to take. The next thing I decided to do was to draw up a course of study and to devise plans to raise money for buying the land, erecting the school-building, and supporting the school, as there were no funds appropriated for such a school. Now, this was the Saturday night before the appointed school meeting, and it took me the greater part of that Saturday night to work out a course of study and devise my plans. I had no one to assist me, not a single individual, no board or organization to consult for advice or suggestions, no board to whom I could submit my resolution for inspection, approval, or adoption. Now, what was I to do? To whom could I apply but to God for instruction and guidance? I sat by the table, bent over my machine, thinking, thinking, thinking, until at last I decided to found my school on the Word of God. Now, it was the Lord who implanted that thought and desire in my heart, for at that time I was in darkness and blind to the truth that leads to salvation as revealed in the Bible.

I adopted the course of study that had been prescribed by the Board of Education for the public schools of Alabama, including such subjects as reading, writing, spelling, language, history, geography, arithmetic, physiology, hygiene, etc.; but in addition to these secular branches I resolved to have the Bible taught in my school. For a

motto for my school I chose the Bible-passage: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." Matt. 6, 33. All students were to memorize the school motto. I chose a prayer for my school, the Lord's Prayer. All students who attended the school were to learn the Lord's Prayer. In addition to that all students were to memorize certain portions of the Psalms and other parts of the Bible which the teacher would assign. The school hymns were to be plantation songs such as they used at Tuskegee Institute, until I could find time to compile a hymn-book. Now, this was all the Lord's doing, for I have lived to see my desire for a Christian education for my people fulfilled, to wit, in the Lutheran Church, which the Lord has sent to Alabama to enlighten us in His Word.

Besides this secular and, as I called it, Bible Training Course, sewing, cooking, and music were to be taught.

Having composed my course of study, I turned my attention to devising plans for raising money to buy the land and build. The first step I took was to pledge to give up all my living, the two hundred dollars I had saved from teaching in the public school. I resolved to raise the rest of the money by subscriptions from my white friends. Then I considered ways and means of securing funds for the support of the school after its organization and establishment.

1. I resolved to see the county board of education and the district trustees and contract for the public school fund, which was seventy-five dollars for four months. This was to help pay the teachers' salary.

2. I resolved to organize a local board of trustees and ask the trustees to pay five dollars a year tuition for their children. This money was also to help support the teachers.

3. I resolved to charge each child one dollar to enter

and twenty-five cents a month for tuition. The money thus realized was also to be used to help pay the salary of the teachers.

On Sunday after the close of the Sunday-school we held our meeting in the Rosebud Methodist church. There was quite a large number of interested persons, for Brother Ramsey had been very busy in the performance of his duty as a committee of one to notify the people of the meeting and invite them to come.

There was no organization; therefore I was obliged to preside. It was not a pleasant thing for a young girl to preside over a body of men, in fact, it was somewhat embarrassing to me.

After the meeting had been opened with a song and a prayer, I arose and read my resolution, including the course of study and plans for securing funds. After much discussion by both men and women, the resolution was accepted. Then we organized our local board of trustees. It consisted of eighteen members.

Thus was organized the Rosebud Literary and Industrial School for the benefit of the destitute, common people, July 8, 1912. The Lord Jesus, who knows all things, knew the thoughts of my heart and that I meant well. He beheld my desire and longing to do something for the Lord and my race.

Jesus took my little course of study, shabby as it was, together with my plans, and fulfilled them to the letter through the Lutheran Church, which it pleased Him to send down into the Black Belt. We not only have a Bible Training Department, as I called it when I started, but we have wholly religious, Christian schools and churches, Sunday-schools and Christian instruction meetings, where the Word of God is taught in its purity and truth, as you will see in reading on.

Chapter 7. My Struggles in Raising Funds to Buy the Land, Erect and Equip the First Schoolhouse at Rosebud.

And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive. — *Matt. 21, 22.*

When I organized the school at Rosebud, July 8, 1912, the poor colored people had no money to give toward defraying the expense of building a school; therefore I assumed the responsibility of raising the required capital by soliciting from the generous public for the cause and of having everything in readiness for the opening of school on the first Monday in October, 1912.

The local board pledged themselves to do all they could. I had no time to lose. Every day had to count, for I had only three months in which to prepare the building material, and no money except my two hundred dollars. That night when I returned home I prayed over the matter. The next morning I took the course of study and my subscription list and went to see Mr. Bonner. As I walked along the wayside I talked to God in fervent prayer, asking Him to help me to raise the necessary funds.

Arriving at Mr. Bonner's residence, I went to the back steps and waited for some one to come out. The first person I saw that morning was "Aunt" Jane Ramsey, the cook, a half-sister of my mother. "'Aunt' Jane," said I, "I want to see Capt'n." We all call Mr. Bonner Capt'n.

"Aunt" Jane went into the house, and Mrs. Bonner came out. A glance at her face told me that her heart was with me in my undertaking. She looked at me and smiled, saying, "How are you, Rosa? You came to see the Capt'n?" I answered, "Yes, ma'am."

"About your big school?"

"Yes, ma'am," was again my reply. Then she proceeded to question me about the school. I handed her the course of study. She read it over carefully and remarked, "Rosa, this is nice. Lee told me about the letter which you sent him Saturday and said that he was going to give you ten dollars when you are ready."

Just then Mr. Bonner came into the house. She called to him, "Lee, here is Rosa. She wants to see you about her big school."

"All right," he replied; "I hope she will see me quick, as I must go to the field." After making a few brief remarks, I handed him the course of study. He looked it over and said, "You ought to have a list and take it around and see how much help you can get." I handed him my subscription list. He looked it over, then took his pencil and signed $50, instead of the ten dollars he had told Mrs. Bonner he was going to give.

I could hardly believe my own eyes when I saw him write $50. Returning the list to me, he remarked in a moderate tone of voice, "You may take this to all the white people and see what you can get. There will be no harm in it." I thanked him sincerely and started out on my canvassing tour.

I next went to Mr. J. C. Harper, who had partly raised me from childhood. Mr. Harper has a live-stock farm near Neenah, Ala., but he resides at Oak Hill. I knew Mr. Harper was at his farm, so I went to Neenah. As I approached one of Mr. Harper's pastures, I saw him a great distance from the highway, having some cattle fed. Making my way through brush and briars, mud-holes and little ponds of water, I finally reached Mr. Harper. As I approached him, I said, "Good morning, Capt'n." Looking up in surprise, he exclaimed, "Why, how are you, Rosa?"

"Capt'n," said I, holding out my papers to him, "I have a little business matter which I should like you to look over if you have time, and help me out with it if you can see your way clear."

He stopped his work at once, brushed his hands, and reached for the papers. He read them over and smiled, saying, "Look here, Rosa; Mr. Bonner has given a mighty heap. What kind of a trade have you made?" I laughed and answered, "No kind." Then he took his pencil and pledged ten dollars, saying, "Rosa, I will help you build any kind of school you want to build." I thanked him and returned home in prayer, praising and thanking God.

The next day I hitched father's mule to the buggy and drove over to Oak Hill. As I drove along the road alone, I prayed almost incessantly, asking the Lord to be with me, as I was then going among strangers. The first man I approached in Oak Hill was Mr. John T. Dale. I did not know him personally, but wished to see him first, as I had heard that he was one of the leading men in the State. Walking into his store, I said to a colored man standing near by, "Which one is Mr. John Dale?" The man pointed toward a little office in the rear of the store and said, "He is back there."

I walked slowly back to the office, halting as I came to the threshold of the office-door, and said, "Good morning, sir." He answered my greeting kindly. I then said, "Is this Mr. John Dale?" He replied, "Yes."

I then proceeded, "Mr. Dale, this is Rosa Young."

"Well, Rosa Young," said he, "I am glad to meet you. What can I do for you?"

"Mr. Dale," said I, "I do not know whether you take any interest in anything like this or not, but I want to get you to look over this little matter and help me if you see your way clear."

He took the papers, and as he read, I watched his countenance change, while his eyes danced from side to side of the page. Then he said, "Girl, you are going to build that school; I want you to build it." He then wrote his pledge, and said, "I am going to help you some more."

He did help me from that time on. Mr. John Dale has been one of the strong supporters of my work in word and deed. He is a staunch friend of our Lutheran Mission and was one of the great instruments in the hands of God in saving our Lutheran Mission in the Black Belt during the War.

The next place I visited was the home of the white preacher of Oak Hill. I approached the front gate and knocked. A kind-looking white lady came out. I said, "Good morning, miss." She answered the greeting. Then I said, "I want to see Mr. Henry, please, ma'am." She answered, "All right; come on in."

When I came to the front steps, the lady walked before me until she came to the door of the study, where the preacher was sitting at his desk. "There is Mr. Henry," she said kindly.

Mr. Henry looked up at me, closed his book on his thumb, and rested it upon his knee. "Mr. Henry," said I, "this is Rosa Young from Rosebud." He repeated thoughtfully, "Rosa Young, Rosa Young." "Yes, sir," said I and proceeded, "Mr. Henry, I do not know whether you believe in the education of the colored people or not; but I have a little matter which I should like to have you look over and help me with if you can, please."

He reached for my papers, looked them over, and said, "How much do you want me to give?"

"Just any amount that you feel able to give," said I.

"Well, how much do you think that I ought to give?" he rejoined.

"I would rather leave that to you, for anything you give will be cheerfully and thankfully received," I answered.

He smiled and wrote his pledge and returned the papers to me. He suggested that I see Mr. Dale, Mr. Bonner, and Mr. Harper and ask them to serve as an advisory board for me. "I will help you in any way that they help you," he concluded.

I then went to all the leading white citizens of Oak Hill, introducing myself in the same way as I had in approaching Mr. John T. Dale and Mr. Henry.

The Lord was with me; He guided and protected me as I approached those white people in the interest of my destitute race. By the time I had seen all the men, it was approaching evening, and I was obliged to leave for home, as I was alone. I must say that in my past life I have visited a number of small Southern towns, but I have found no town where the average of culture and intelligence is as high as among the white people of Oak Hill; in fact, it is far above the average; it is an exceptional, a model town.

When I returned home that night, I prayed fervently, giving praise and thanks to God for the success He had given me among those leading white people. Not a man to whom I presented my papers had turned them down thus far.

The next trip I made was to Neenah. There I was quite well known, for it was my post-office. All those to whom I presented my papers gave me a pledge.

By this time I had just about canvassed Rosebud, Oak Hill, and Neenah, receiving a total of $101.85.

Having this amount of money in sight, I turned my attention to the purchasing of a site on which to erect the school building. The present five-acre plot on which our church at Rosebud is located was originally owned by my

grandfather, old Sam Bonner, my mother's father. Once upon a time Grandpa Sam moved from Rosebud to Camden, Ala., and lived several years with Mr. W. J. Bonner, one of Mr. J. Lee Bonner's brothers. When Grandpa tired of living in Camden, Mr. Bonner gave him some money and told him to buy himself a little home. Grandpa followed this advice, returned to Rosebud, and purchased these five acres. After the death of Grandpa Sam and Grandma Hannah, the land came into the possession of their heirs, my mother and her two brothers, Ollie and Press Bonner.

I consulted with these three heirs to buy the five-acre plot for the site of my school. After much quizzing on the part of the heirs and pleading on my part I succeeded in securing the land for the sum of fifty dollars. This money I took from the sum of the two hundred that I had pledged and paid them for it.

When Grandpa Sam purchased that land, he never, I dare say, dreamed that some day a Christian church would be located on the place. Sometimes while I am sitting in our Christ Evangelical Lutheran Mission at Rosebud, listening to the preaching of the pure Gospel, the singing of the hymns with their German melodies, beholding the true administration of the Holy Sacraments, I wonder whether, if Grandpa Sam and Grandma Hannah were just permitted to visit their little lonely cottage nestled behind a clump of pines a little way back from the public highway, they would be able to recognize the site of their former little homestead. God surely works in a mysterious way.

Dear reader, there is such a deep feeling in connection with this plot of land and the coming of the Lutheran Mission into Alabama that it is my will and desire that our mission may ever remain here until it is proclaimed that time shall be no more; and when I depart from this

life, no matter where I may be when I am called to yield up my spirit, may my remains be laid away to repose somewhere in our mission churchyard, on this plot, until the day of general resurrection.

Having secured a clear title, I called a meeting of my local school board, to read it to them. To my surprise, instead of receiving congratulations, I met with criticism. I had had the title made out in my name. I realized then that these poor people would not be able to support a large school, and I thought I would seek a stronger source of support. At that time I did not have the least idea what that source would be, but I firmly believed the Lord would help me to interest some source of help when the time came. I thought I would have no trouble in changing the title of the land; but, on the other hand, if a number of persons were required to give their signature or consent before the title could be changed, it was doubtful whether I could ever get all to agree. But no matter how I explained things, my local board would not hear me. After a heated discussion we decided to send a committee to Mr. J. Lee Bonner for advice and then adjourned. Capt'n Bonner told them: "That is the thing to do. Let Rosa hold the title; and probably she can succeed in getting some one to help her. We white people all have trusted, and we are willing to trust, her with our money to build a school for the colored people." That settled the affair of the title, and we proceeded.

I then set out to find some lumber for building. In those days, sawmills were few and scattered. I went to several different sawmill camps and talked and figured on lumber, but because of the exorbitant prices I could not make a deal. I continued to seek for lumber, and at last my brother Sheffield one day told me about a sawmill that was opposite Pine Apple, a village town a little to the south.

The next day Sheffield and I went to this sawmill and asked for Mr. Arthur Lee. After figuring and figuring we came to an agreement. He promised to let me have the lumber for $20 per thousand. I was to pay down a certain sum and the balance in partial monthly payments.

I returned home and went through the community hunting for wagons. I asked every man in the community who owned a wagon to haul a load of lumber free of charge. The colored men did not have any money to give me for the building, but at my request they started their wagons rolling. For nearly two weeks, day and night, one could see wagon-loads of lumber and hear the men throwing the lumber on the school ground. It was in midsummer and so hot that the men had to do most of their hauling by night.

After a considerable quantity of lumber was on hand, I started out to find a carpenter. I went to more than half a dozen men and was turned down because I did not have the amount of money they wanted for building the school.

At last I went to "Brother" Nathan T. Ramsey. When I approached him, I said, "Mr. N. T., I have come to get you to help me, and I do not want you to deny me."

He requested me to tell him what it was about. I then explained to him that I had asked so many men to build my school, but that they had all turned me down because I did not have the amount of money they required. "Brother" Ramsey and I continued to talk and figure until at last he agreed to build my school as a deed of charity for $190.

Soon after this, "Brother" Ramsey called his men together and began work. One day, when I came to the building, "Brother" Ramsey had thirteen men hired, paying each a dollar a day. They were to receive their pay that night, and I did not have one penny. I had spent all the

money I had solicited, together with the remainder of mine, in buying various materials for the building.

I talked with Ramsey, went home, hooked up the old mule and buggy, and started out for Camden, the county seat, to secure money for paying those men that night. I prayed all the way, asking the Lord to be with me.

When I reached Camden the first white gentleman I approached in the interest of the school building was Judge Stanford, probate judge. I went up to his front steps, where he was sitting on his porch, introduced myself, and presented my papers together with my usual request. He read the papers and then remarked, "I do not know why everybody who wants something comes to me. Because I am an earthly judge, I suppose." He gave me a donation.

From there I went to a number of the leading men in Camden, not to all, for I wished to return in time to pay "Brother" Ramsey's day laborers. The Lord was with me. The result of that day's canvassing in Camden was $24.15.

When I reached Rosebud that evening, it was quite dark. I passed by the home of Mr. Jimmy Newberry and left the money with him for "Brother" Ramsey to pay his laborers.

It was now drawing near the first Monday in October, and the building was not yet finished. I had to begin to make preparations for the opening of school, employing teachers and raising funds wherewith to pay them.

The Lord is wonderful. He works in mysterious ways. We did not have enough money to complete the building and no money with which to buy more material. I advised the carpenters to work up what lumber they had, when they would have to discontinue the work until I could obtain more money.

We then held a meeting to raise funds for the support of the school that fall. All the local trustees paid their five dollars; the children of all others were to pay $1 to

enter and a class fee of twenty-five cents a month. I contracted with the County Board of Education for the public school fund of $75. Having thus a good sum of money in view for the support of the teachers, we were about ready to begin; but we had to find a place where to teach until the carpenters had finished working up all the lumber. Our long dream was now about to become a reality.

Chapter 8. Opening the School at Rosebud and Its History from the Fall of 1912 to the Spring of 1914.

All things work together for good to them that love God. *Rom. 8, 28.*

When the time came to open "The Rosebud Literary and Industrial School" at Rosebud on the first Monday of October, 1912, the good Lord brought it to pass, for He has told us in His holy Word: "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass." Ps. 37, 5. Our school building was not completed, so I opened the school with seven pupils in an old hall where the cattle went for shelter during the night.

The Rosebud School is located near the center of Wilcox County, twelve miles from Camden, the county seat; fifty-four miles from Selma, where our Alabama Luther College is located, and two miles from the L. & N. Railroad. In this region there is a vast number of colored people, although many of them have moved away to other sections since the school was organized.

I was obliged to teach in the old cattle hall for one month, in order to give the carpenters time to work up the lumber they had on hand. I will not say they completed the building, for the building I designed was not really completed until the Lutheran Board for Colored

Missions came into possession of the property in 1916. I was kept very busy that month; the enrolment increased daily, and I had to get the necessary school supplies. By the help of the Lord I succeeded in purchasing forty-five long benches from the Methodist church-body, five heaters, one large school bell, a sewing machine, and in paying a reasonable amount on a nice piano. I received a gift of 150 Bibles and New Testaments for our Bible Training Department from the American Bible Society at Phila-

"Rosebud Literary and Industrial School."

A schoolroom on either side of the hall. This building, given to the Lutheran Mission, made room for a new chapel-school in 1927.

delphia and a nice collection of useful books to begin a school library from Knox Academy, belonging to the Reformed Presbyterian church and school at Selma, Ala.

The first Monday of November we were ready to move from the old cattle hall into our new schoolhouse, which nestled on a hill behind a clump of pines. There was no public dedication, but I breathed a prayer in my heart to God as I unlocked the door for the other two teachers and the pupils to march in. I gave the Lord the building

with all its contents for the uplift of my race and the spreading of His kingdom, for I realized that without God we could do nothing. The music teacher, Miss Lorene Smith, of Selma, played the piano, and we all marched into the school building and were seated. We then sang two verses of a hymn, while Miss Smith accompanied the singing on the piano. Then we read a portion of Scripture responsively, as we had enough Bibles on hand, repeated the Lord's Prayer, and sang two more verses of another hymn. I then delivered a short informal address, in which I stressed the need of a threefold education, especially that of the heart; for I told them that morning, and still hold to my old proverb, "A bright head with a wicked heart stands for nothing; it tends only to breed trouble."

I also taught them the following little problem, which I have often since illustrated to my pupils: —

A life + Christ = Success.

A life — Christ = Failure, no matter what you can do.

After the address, Miss Smith played a march, and we all passed out of the chapel into the different classrooms for our regular day's lessons.

The school faculty consisted of Miss Lorene Smith, of Selma, Ala., who took charge of the cooking, sewing, and music; my sister Viola, who instructed the pupils in the primary grades from the primer through the second grade, while I was to take care of the students from the third grade through the seventh, if there were any.

Our daily schedule was somewhat as follows: The first bell rang each morning at 8.30, the second bell at 9 o'clock. Then all the children formed a long line across the schoolyard, and while the music teacher played the march, they passed with accurate step into the chapel for devotion, which was conducted daily.

After devotions came the regular daily lessons, reading and spelling in all the grades, recess at 10.30, then arithmetic in all the grades, and noon recess from 12 to 1 o'clock.

During the first period in the afternoon each teacher conducted a kind of religious service in her own room. We sang the Tuskegee plantation songs, repeated the Lord's Prayer, and memorized Bible verses. The pupils were required to tell the Bible stories in their own words. After this religious instruction, or service, we resumed our daily secular work, and instruction was given in English, geography, history, spelling, writing, etc.

At the close of school in the afternoon the big bell rang, the teacher played the march, and all the pupils returned to the chapel. Here the roll was called, to which each pupil responded with a Bible-verse. This was followed by a hymn, the Lord's Prayer, and music, while the children passed out by grades, marching down the long thirty-foot hall into the school-yard for home.

The religious exercises were something I myself had planned. At that time I knew of no school that held religious exercises. I had a longing to reach the heart of my pupils. I wanted a really Christian school, but had no one to instruct me just how to conduct it, no one to enlighten me in the Scriptures, so that I might have imparted it to my pupils. I was just feeling my way along, asking the Lord to take my school, to accept it, and make of it a great religious center. This was one of my daily prayers; but I did not have the least idea how it would be done. All good things come from God, even our good desires. God gave me this desire and longing for real Christianity. He was going to use our little school as an instrument to place the Lutheran Church, the true visible Church, in the Black Belt to lead us out of our spiritual darkness into light.

Aside from the religious exercises and the secular branches we had a debating club and literary society, which met on alternate Fridays.

The first year our enrolment reached 155. School-children came from all the surrounding communities, Oak Hill, Allenton, Caledonia, Watson Crossing, Nadawah, Jordan, Dulaney, Brazie, Hines, Camden, Olea, Sedan, and Coy. A number of people brought children to board, and our home was soon converted into a regular young ladies' villa. I had my grandfather's little log cabin fixed up for a boys' dormitory, and a number of young men slept there, but took their meals at our home. The board was only five dollars a month, and they could pay a portion of that in farm products, if they desired. I felt willing to do almost anything, just to help the poor people out with the education of their children.

So many people brought their children to board that I could not accommodate them all. I was obliged to appeal to my friends to help me out.

In order to support our school, we often were obliged to give concerts, entertainments, and picnics. On such occasions we often went to the kind white ladies who were our friends, explained our plans, and were presented with nice cakes, baked chickens, and ice-cream to sell for our school.

Mr. J. T. Dale dictated a circular letter for me in which we advertised our little school. I had the letter printed and had it broadcast through the mails. By some means unknown to me, but probably through some of my friends, some of the circulars even reached the hands of people living in the New England States, and I received a total of $56 from them.

That year our school was in session only six months. It closed the last Thursday and Friday of March, 1913.

When school closed that spring, I went on a money-

begging tour for the benefit of our school. I met with some encouragement and some discouragement. I did not approach the white people on this tour as I did when soliciting funds for the building. I went among the leading colored people in Selma, Montgomery, Mobile, and Birmingham. I stood before lawyers, doctors, professors, bankers, business men, bishops, and preachers of all denominations and lectured in the different churches whenever I was permitted. Some gave me donations, some kindly turned me away, while others did so harshly, sneering at me and mocking me. One night while in Birmingham, I was lost. I was on the Idlewild street-car, going from the north to the south side, and alighted from the car at the wrong avenue. I wandered about for more than an hour and began to grow nervous and excited, when, upon looking up, I saw the tower of a church. The thought came to me to direct my way to that church, for I knew the way well from there, as I had gone to that church many a time.

One evening I addressed the Men's Business League. There were more than one hundred men present, and I was the only lady. After my speech, Professor Taylor, who, jointly with a glee club, had traveled in the interest of the Tuskegee Institute for more than thirteen years, took up the donations for me. The gentlemen gave me $15.

Our second school-term began on the first Monday of October, 1913. Our enrolment reached 215. Three other teachers besides myself had to be engaged. We were so crowded that we were obliged to build an addition to the school, a larger chapel.

That year our school was in session seven months. It closed the last of April, 1914. Hundreds of people attended the closing exercises. It was reported by a committee appointed to count the people that besides the white people eight hundred colored people were present.

Soon after the close of school I started out on my tour to solicit money to support the school for the coming year and to complete the much-needed chapel.

"All things work together for good to them that love God." God was leading us all along, and the time was drawing near when He was going to place His dear Lutheran Church, the true visible Church, in the Black Belt and to lead us out of darkness into light, for He loved us with an everlasting love. He willed that we, too, should be saved. He was not willing that any of us should perish in that gross spiritual darkness which had covered our section. And this humble little school was to be taken over by the Lutheran Church.

Chapter 9. How the Lutheran Church Came into Alabama.

What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter. — *John 13, 7.*

We cannot understand why the Lord takes our near and dear ones away from us by death, sometimes while they are in the very prime of life. We cannot understand why our dear Lord sometimes lays us low on a bed of sickness and pain when we should like so much to be well, going about working in His vineyard and doing good to our friends and fellow-men. We cannot understand why God, who rules the universe, suffers great steamboat disasters, railroad wrecks, ravages of war, various cruelties, oppressions, persecutions, and all other wrongs which are found recorded on the pages of history. But although we cannot understand these things, we have the divine promise that they are sent to us for our good and that we "shall know hereafter." Yes, hereafter! The blessed hereafter!

Let us wait patiently for it in faith till the time when we shall know and understand all these things.

Just as slavery, with all its cruelties and inhuman acts, was a great blessing in disguise, so was the invasion of the cotton-destroying Mexican boll-weevil in our country in 1914. Just as God often uses nature, creatures, disease, and death as instruments to bring men to Jesus, so He used the little Mexican boll-weevil as an instrument to put the Lutheran Church, the true visible Church here on earth, into this dark, benighted Black Belt of Alabama to lead us poor sinners out of darkness into light. "Thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter," says the Savior.

I heard of the invasion of the boll-weevil in Texas when I was a child, but the thought never came to me that some day this little insect would cause me and my fellow-men to suffer. As time rolled by, the boll-weevil moved slowly, but surely toward our section, probably at the rate of sixty miles a year. As the weevils drew nearer, the Government sent out demonstration agents, telling the people that the boll-weevil was coming and that they were to prepare and make war on the invaders.

The Mexican boll-weevil invaded our country in 1914 and brought with it hard times. The insects practically destroyed the cotton crops, which was the only standard cash crop in our section at that time. Tenants who had been harvesting large cotton crops could hardly harvest as much as a bale; several would have to lump together their small crops in order to make one whole bale of cotton.

The extensive credit system according to which the landlords had been advancing the tenants money, probably since the time of the Emancipation, was then cut off. There was no advancing whatever. All a man received was what he worked for or paid for in cash. If he made a dollar to-day, he had to live from it to-morrow. The

landlords had to rid themselves of the burden of tenants. Each man had to paddle his own canoe.

This discontinuation of the credit system among the tenants created great excitement; for the poor, ignorant colored people had never learned the lesson of depending, trusting, and relying wholly upon God, who has the very hair of their heads all numbered, who feeds the ravens,

Transportation in Alabama.
Such conveyances sometimes bring people to "Sunday meetin'."

and who clothes the grass of the field. Prior to this time most of the tenants depended wholly upon the white landlords to provide clothing, shoes, food, medicine, and so forth, for them. Cotton, King Cotton, was their greatest aim in life. Now that they had to depend upon themselves, they all went about in deep mourning. "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter."

Business was dull, and in that fall of 1914 when the time came to open our school, things looked very dark. The enrolment in the school fell, and we were obliged to dismiss one of our teachers. The people had but very little cash. We were obliged to accept farm products, corn, etc. This I had hauled to Camden and sold for what I could get in order to secure money with which to pay our teachers in part. We fell so far behind in paying salaries that our music teacher was compelled to resign that Christmas.

When school closed that spring, 1915, I had only $12.85 with which to pay the salaries. I gave Sister Viola $12.50, and I kept 35 cents for my salary that year. The saddest part of all was that Sister Viola, who had been with me all through school and from the beginning in this school-work, resigned and accepted a position in the city school at Prattville, Ala., at a salary of $60 a month.

After my sister's resignation I went about in meditation and prayer, trying to make up my mind to resign and also try to secure a position in a school paying a big salary; but somehow I could not resign so easily. There was a tie between me and the little colored children of my school. I could not even entertain the thought of turning them out of school, closing the doors, and letting them go back into darkness, ignorance, and superstition. Such a thought was painful to me. No, I could not close the doors. Besides, I felt that by closing the school, all the donations that had been given by our kind white friends would be lost and that thereafter they would look upon us as people who start things, but never finish them.

Thus, not willing to give up the school, I called together our local board of trustees. At this meeting we all agreed to offer the school to the African Methodist Episcopal Church, as we were all members of that branch of the Methodists at that time. This body was to hold an edu-

cational meeting in Selma that June (1915). I decided that it was best for me to go to Selma prior to this session, take the matter up with the president of Payne University, and get him to make the recommendation for us, as he had charge of all the educational affairs of that branch of the Methodists in Alabama at that time.

The worst of all was that I wished to go to Selma and adjust these matters, but did not have my train-fare; I had only those thirty-five cents. What did I do? One Saturday evening I took those thirty-five cents, boarded the train, and went to Camden. When I arrived there, I had only ten cents left, and it was nearly sunset, as the train had been late. Where was I to lodge that night? With only a dime I could do nothing. However, I had some relatives who lived about two and a half miles out of Camden. There was nothing left for me to do but to try to reach their home. When I arrived there, they were greatly surprised to see me at that late hour, and all alone. I told them of my mission in Camden.

The next morning, Sunday, I hurried to the parsonage of the Methodist preacher. I showed him my recommendations from Mr. J. Lee Bonner, Mr. J. C. Harper, and the Hon. J. T. Dale. Then I asked the privilege of addressing his congregation in the interest of my school at Rosebud. This he readily granted me. I thanked God in my heart, for I was trying to raise my fare to Selma. Just before the minister closed his service that night, he permitted me to speak to his people. The good people of Camden gave me a nice little collection. I do not remember the amount, but among those who gave were Mr. and Mrs. Ned Allen, who are now charter members of our Lutheran mission at Camden.

That Monday morning when I returned to Neenah, I went to the post-office for my mail. I received a letter from Mrs. Irving, Brooklyn on the Hudson, New York,

enclosing a check for $5. I was very much uplifted in spirit, for now I had more than my fare to Selma.

The very next morning I went to Selma. I had the opportunity of discussing the Rosebud school question with President Archie. He promised to recommend to the A. M. E. Connection in Alabama that it take over the Rosebud school and use it as a branch or feeder of Payne University.

When the board of trustees of Payne University met, Professor Archie kept his promise. Bishop Joshua Jones appointed a committee of seven men to visit the Rosebud school and investigate the matter, but this committee was not to go to Rosebud until he returned (to the State) from the Presiding Elders' Council in order that he might accompany them.

The Presiding Elders' Council met at Prattville, Ala., that August. Twenty-six presiding elders from Alabama and Tennessee were present. But God did not will that the Methodist Church should take the Rosebud school, as I see clearly now; — for what happened? When the question arose, there was great confusion. It reminded me very much of the story of the Tower of Babel. The men began to fight each other. They fought the bishop, they fought the committee, and they fought over the location of the school. President Archie and Bishop Jones could prevail nothing. Dean Brooks arose and made this prediction: "If we do not take that school, some other organization will take it. God is not going to let it fall, for that young woman is working too faithfully."

When Bishop Jones saw that nothing could be done, he disbanded the first committee and appointed a new committee of three men, who were to come to Rosebud and deliver to us the message of refusal. Upon the arrival of the committee I held a private meeting with them in the school office. The chairman rose and delivered the mes-

sage. "Miss Rosa," he said, "there were twenty-six presiding elders present in our council, and they send you greeting. They say that you have acted as a loyal African Methodist. They say you went out since your graduation, built a school, and gave us the first offer. But we are unable to take it. You are now privileged to apply to any other body or association for help in order to save your school."

I answered, "Well, you-all have released me."

"Yes, we have released you," he replied. "Now go and seek help anywhere."

So thus I was honorably discharged; but I felt greatly disappointed. I was thankful, however, that they turned me down so kindly. "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter." Thus says the Savior.

Having been denied by the Church of my childhood, I went to seek help from another source. That night I prayed almost incessantly. The next step I took was to appeal to Mr. James T. Dillard, of New Orleans, La., the agent of the Anna Jeans Fund. This appeal was denied.

I applied to the agent of the Rosenwald Fund and was denied. I appealed to the authorities of the Slater Fund, but with no success. I cried in vain to the Reformed Presbyterian Church, the United Presbyterian Church, and the American Presbyterian Church.

I then wrote to the mission board of the Congregational Church; but their answer was so discouraging. The secretary wrote that they had one hundred colored schools and that, if I wished to help my race, he would advise me to close the school and take some other steps, as he thought that the colored people had enough schools. By this time I was almost discouraged; I was growing weaker and weaker over the matter. "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter." Yes, the blessed hereafter!

When the time came to open the school again in October, 1915, the way looked so dark. I had met with so many denials and disappointments that I could hardly muster up courage to start. I taught for a few weeks, but I was so lonesome and so low-spirited. All my assistant teachers had deserted me, and I was left alone with one hundred and fifteen pupils. "Thou shalt know hereafter."

At last, one day, I came to the conclusion that I had done just about all that I could do, that I might just as well close the school and write in large print across the door, "Hard times."

Before I did this, I went over to see Mr. and Mrs. J. Lee Bonner, my white friends. I wished to tell Mrs. Bonner of my sad plan, as she had always manifested great interest in my work. That day, when I reached Mrs. Bonner's home, I did not go in to see her immediately, but took a seat under a large oak-tree that stood just outside the front yard. While I was sitting there in deep sorrow over the thought of closing my dear school, Mrs. Bonner appeared on her front porch. She saw at a glance the sadness on my face and called out in great surprise, "Rosa, what is the matter?"

I told her of my plan and how I hated to see my school close down.

"Why don't you apply to your Church for help?" she inquired.

I then related the story of the refusal I had met with from my Church. Her face flushed with sympathy, and she sorrowfully said, "Well, Rosa, you have worked hard. I cannot blame you for closing down the school if you have done all that you can do."

We talked a few moments longer, and then I walked slowly away, while she stood within the yard with her arms folded and leaning against the railing of the fence.

"Good-by, Rosa," she said; "I hope you will have much success when you leave."

"I thank you, Miss Eula" (that is her given name), said I.

The next day at school I sat down and wrote Mr. Bonner a letter in which I told him of my sad plan and that the reason I wished to go and seek another position was to make money with which to pay him the honest debt I owed him; for Mr. Bonner had lent me money from time to time to carry on the school. I sealed the letter and sent it to Mr. Bonner's house with one of my school-boys. That day Mr. Bonner was sick in bed. When Mrs. Bonner told him that she had a letter from Rosa, he opened his eyes and told her to read it. Then he said: "Write and tell Rosa that I know the times are hard and that she, being a woman, is up against circumstances where moneyed men can hardly see their way clear; but if she will stay there and carry on the school, I will cancel the debt she owes me."

When I received these words from Mr. Bonner, I was very much encouraged and felt like going on with my work; but there was a much larger debt pending which I owed Mr. J. C. Harper for hard-earned money, which he had lent me to help pay the salaries of my teachers. What was I to do about that debt?

That evening when I left school and was on my way home, I met Mr. Harper riding along the road on his big red horse. I called to him. He halted, and I walked up to him and began to relate my sad plan. As I talked, he remained seated on his horse, holding the bridle reins and looking directly down upon the ground. When I had finished speaking, he said, "Rosa, I know the times are hard, but if you will hold on and teach the school a while longer, you may come out better than you think. As far as the money which you owe me is concerned, you may pay me that just any time when you can."

Again my spirit was uplifted.

That night when I returned home, I prayed and prayed and prayed. Then I decided that I would write one more letter, and if then no relief came, I would close the school, for I was just about discouraged. Now, that letter was to go to Dr. Booker T. Washington, our great leader. I wrote Dr. Washington that I felt that he had as much as he could look after in the operation of the Tuskegee Institute; all, therefore, that I asked of him was to give me the names of some individual or association in the North that he thought would help me keep my school alive for the benefit of my race. The next day I mailed my letter, and then I prayed and waited for an answer.

At last one day a letter came from Tuskegee Institute signed by Booker T. Washington himself. In this letter he told me he was unable to help me in the least; but he would advise me to write to the Board of Colored Missions of the Lutheran Church. He said they were doing more for the colored race than any other denomination he knew of. He liked them because of the religious training which they were giving the colored people. He gave me the address of of Rev. C. F. Drewes, who was then chairman of the Board for Colored Missions.

Under separate cover, Dr. Washington sent me a small pamphlet called the *Negro Year-book*. In this book could be found the name and address of individuals and organizations helping the destitute colored people. He gave me the number of the page in the book where I could find those addresses and said that if I did not succeed with the Lutherans, I might write to the others, as that would do no harm. "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter."

I read Dr. Washington's letter over and over, again and again. Then I waited about two weeks before I wrote to any of the parties he had mentioned, and during that

time I prayed almost incessantly; many a night I fell asleep praying over the matter. In writing, I took my stand from Acts 1, 23—26, where the disciples of Jesus nominated two men to succeed Judas and cast lots for the Lord to show them which of the twain He had chosen for His disciple in the place of Judas. I wrote to every address on that page of the *Year-book,* and when I had finished and sealed the letters, I said, "Now, whomever the Lord wills or allows to take my school, his heart He will move to do so; and if no one takes it, I shall be satisfied." Among those to whom I wrote was our own Pastor C. F. Drewes.

Rev. Nils J. Bakke.
The organizer of our wonderfully blessed missions in Alabama.

I mailed my letters and went along praying day and night, asking the Lord to move some one's heart to heed our Macedonian cry, "Come over and help us." I believe in prayer; prayer will bring you things that nothing else can.

One day the mail brought me several replies to the letters I had written. To my surprise they were all refusals. My courage fell when I read those letters; still, I did not give up praying entirely, as I had not heard from all to whom I had applied. A short time passed, and one day a letter came from the sainted Rev. N. J. Bakke. Rev. Drewes had sent my letter to him with instructions to investigate the matter. He made no definite promise in his letter, but all through it, as I read it, I could see gleams of hope and encouragement for me in

my great struggle. The most interesting parts of his letter were the questions he asked, some of which were as follows: —

1. How old are you?
2. To what Church do you belong?
3. In whose name is the title to the land made out?
4. Do you think we can get a Lutheran church in Alabama?

Rev. Bakke advised me to answer his letter at Immanuel Lutheran College, Greensboro, N. C., as he was on his way South at that time. I answered Pastor Bakke's letter and his many questions, but received no reply. I waited a while and wrote again and still received no reply. Somehow I could not give up in this case, as I had done in the others. I wrote Rev. Bakke the third letter; like the woman of Tyre and Sidon, I cried out to him. In reply to this letter he wrote that he had gone from Immanuel Lutheran College to Charlotte, N. C. Later I learned that he wrote that letter to me while sitting at Pastor John McDavid's writing-desk.

In his letter Rev. Bakke stated that, although he doubted nothing that I had stated in my letters, he would rather come and investigate the matter for himself, and he would arrive the twenty-first of the month. Rev. Bakke's delay in answering my letters was not neglect, but simply a test of my sincerity.

The first date he gave was inconvenient for me, as I had to go before the Board of Examiners for the State examinations on December 21. I wrote about this to Rev. Bakke and advised him to come January 7, 1916, as it was the custom to hold a larger farmers' conference at the Rosebud school about that time, and he would thus have the opportunity of addressing a great number of people. He wrote a hasty letter in reply, saying that he would change his date and arrive the seventeenth of

December (1915), as he wished to go home for the holidays. When I received this letter, I had already informed the local board that Rev. Bakke would be there January 7, 1916. What was I to do now? I sent him a special delivery, asking him to please wait until January 7, as I had already informed the people that he was coming then. I wished to have a great crowd present when he came. To my great surprise on the morning of the seventeenth of December I received another letter from Rev. Bakke, saying, "I am too close by to turn back. Meet me to-night at Neenah." God was in the plan; so I laughed and said, "Let him come on. I see that he is a business man."

Rev. Bakke spent the night of the 16th in Selma at a hotel. He told me that some of the boys tried to discourage him and joked about "this man from St. Louis going to Neenah," saying, "There isn't anything at Neenah; even the postmaster goes to Camden with us every night on the train." Not one person in Selma of whom he inquired about Neenah knew where it was or what there was to it.

Nevertheless Rev. Bakke went down to the Louisville and Nashville Railroad station the next morning and boarded the train for Neenah. On the train he had an opportunity to talk with a white gentleman, Mr. Portner, who lived only a few miles from Neenah. He told this man that his business at Neenah was to investigate a matter pertaining to Rosa Young's school. Mr. Portner knew me quite well and knew all about my school-work. He said he was glad to hear that this white gentleman was coming to help Rosa Young out with her school.

When the train stopped, Mr. Portner alighted first to see if there was any one to meet Pastor Bakke. Papa was standing on the platform.

"Is that you, Grant?" inquired Mr. Portner.

"Yes, sir," answered my father.

"Well," said Mr. Portner, "there is an old white man on the train who says he is looking for Rosa Young's school."

"I have come to meet him," replied my father.

"All right," answered Mr. Portner, and rushing back to the train, he soon returned with Pastor Bakke's traveling-bag and handed it to my father.

Pastor Bakke, the old Veteran of the Cross of Christ, came limping down from the coach of the train with a crutch under his arm and a walking-stick in his hand. A cold, sleeting rain was falling. He wore three coats, a dress coat, an overcoat, and a rain-coat. You of my readers who knew him can picture him to your minds as he limped up to my father and introduced himself.

The old Gospel veteran of many a spiritual battle for the Savior was coming at God's command and direction to tell us about Jesus, our Savior, to preach the pure Gospel to the destitute colored people in the benighted Black Belt of Alabama, to lead us out of darkness into light, and to blaze the way for other missionaries. "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter."

Rev. Bakke and my father mounted the same old buggy with which I had driven from time to time soliciting funds for the building of my school. Papa took him to Brother Charlie Bythwoods, where he was to spend his first night among the colored people of the Black Belt of Alabama. Our home was crowded with schoolchildren. I had paid Mrs. Bythwood one dollar to take care of Rev. Bakke that night.

When my father returned home that night, he told me all about Rev. Bakke's arrival. The next morning I wrote Mr. and Mrs. Bonner of his presence and sent them one of the books he had sent me, *Our Colored Missions, Illustrated.* Mr. Bonner wrote that he would keep Rev. Bakke two nights for me. I then hurried over to Brother Byth-

woods, where Rev. Bakke had spent the night, and knocked at the door. He answered, "Come in."

I walked in and said, "Good morning. This is Rosa Young."

He looked me over, then smiled, and said, "Oh, I am so disappointed. I thought I was going to meet a large, large woman who could hardly get along."

We both laughed, and then we began to talk church and school. This was the first conference that was ever held on the Alabama field. I then went to notify all the men to come out to the meeting that evening.

That Saturday evening, December 18, 1915, Pastor Bakke held a meeting with our local school board at the Rosebud schoolhouse. When we were assembled, he asked me to lead in singing. I sang the plantation song "Heavy load, heavy load, Um going to lay down this heavy load." Some years after that Pastor Bakke teased me, saying, "Rosa, you sang that you were going to lay down that heavy load, and you laid it right on me."

Pastor Bakke then prayed and asked the men to express themselves. After all had spoken, they signed a resolution to turn the school over to the Lutheran Church. This Rev. Bakke was to report to the Mission Board on returning to St. Louis. He was then taken to Mr. and Mrs. J. Lee Bonner's home, where he met with the greatest hospitality.

On Sunday morning, December 19, Pastor Bakke held a Lutheran service in the Methodist church. He chose the following for his text: "For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." 1 Cor. 6, 20.

Now, that was the first time we poor colored people had ever heard the preaching of the pure Gospel, and when Pastor Bakke had finished, he had a convinced audience.

On Monday morning, December 20, Pastor Bakke visited our school and gave the children a religious talk.

That night he was brought from Mr. Bonner's home to our house. We had another long talk over church and school that night. Early Tuesday morning he bade us good day and left for his home in St. Louis.

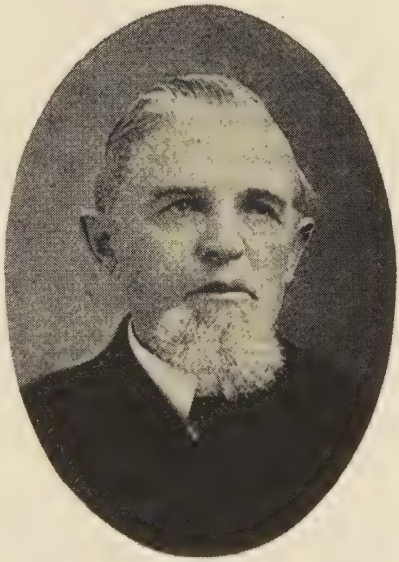
The coming of the Lutheran Church into Alabama is providential. God only used me and the Rosebud school as instruments to place the true visible Church in the Black Belt and lead us poor sinners out of spiritual darkness into light. To begin with, I knew nothing about the Lutheran Church and the great mission-work it was carrying on among the colored people, and I had only a faint knowledge of Luther and the Reformation; but Jesus, who knows all things, dear friends, knew all about the Lutheran mission. Jesus is well pleased with the work of the Lutheran Church and willed to take my little Rosebud school and make out of it a Lutheran school, a Christian school, a Bible school for the saving of souls.

God, who is able to do all things, could have used any of the other sources to whom I had so earnestly appealed for help to sustain the school, but He led the Lutherans to do it. With God nothing is impossible. The coming of the Lutheran Church into Alabama is a godsend. God caused every other source to which I applied to refuse me help until I had applied to the right source. It was God who moved the hearts of Director Drewes and the sainted Pastor Bakke to take the steps they did. Yes, it was the hand of God. It was a direct answer to my prayer. Many a day I walked from my home to school, praying every step, asking God to take my school, not to let it die, to make out of it a great religious center. Mrs. J. Lee Bonner also prayed for me and my school. God answered these prayers by sending the Lutheran Church down into the Black Belt to lead us out of darkness into light. "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." Let us always wait for the blessed hereafter.

Chapter 10. Beginning of Lutheran Mission-Work in Alabama.

Come over into Macedonia and help us. — *Acts 16, 9.*

"This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes." The record of our Lutheran mission-work shows that Rev. J. F. Doescher, the first missionary sent out by the Board for Colored Missions to explore the Southern States, to preach to the colored people wherever permitted, and to observe their spiritual condition, visited Alabama and organized a Lutheran Sunday-school at Mobile. At that time the Mobile station did not look so promising, and for lack of funds and workers it was closed in 1881, nine years before I was born.



Rev. J. F. Doescher.
Our first missionary.

For thirty-four years after this station was closed the 900,000 colored people in Alabama were left in spiritual darkness. They did not even have the opportunity to hear the preaching of the pure Gospel, which was brought to light again by the sainted Martin Luther, the great Reformer. They lived, and many of them died, with their eyes blinded to the true way of salvation.

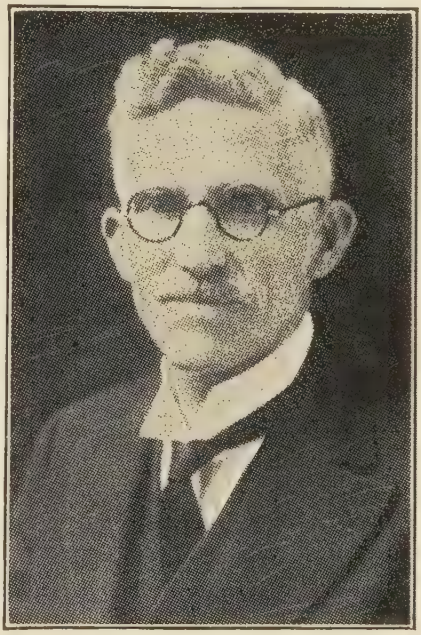
Did the God of Love, who gave His only-begotten Son to suffer and die for the sins of all mankind, mean to suffer the 900,000 colored people in Alabama to perish in gross darkness and be eternally lost when He permitted the Mobile station to be closed in 1881? No, that can-

not be; for we know "God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." God says that whosoever believeth should not perish. That blessed word "whosoever" means the colored people, too. God loved the world, He gave His Son to die for the world, and we, the 900,000 colored people in Alabama, also belong to the world. Therefore God, in His wise providence, out of infinite love for the souls of all mankind, remembered the colored people of Alabama and worked out a plan by which He would give them the golden opportunity to hear the pure Gospel, to believe it and be saved, and to be eternally happy in heaven with Him and all the angels of light.

When I wrote that letter of appeal and sent it to Pastor C. F. Drewes, in October of 1915, thirty-four years after the Mobile station had been closed, I did not know Pastor Drewes, I knew nothing about the Honorable Mission Board, I knew nothing about the great mission-work that was being carried on among my race by the white Lutheran Christians; in fact, even the name of the Lutheran denomination was unknown in this section among the common people. On the other hand, Pastor C. F. Drewes did not know me, the Honorable Mission Board knew nothing about Rosa Young, they knew nothing about the humble little school at Rosebud, they knew nothing of the hard toil I had undergone in order to establish and maintain such a school for the benefit of my race and the spreading of Christ's kingdom. There was no one to introduce or recommend me to them. I dare say that not a single member of the Lutheran faith had ever heard the name Rosa Young. We were all entire strangers to each other. Neither knew anything of the work of the other; but God knew us. He knows all things. He knew about

my humble work and untiring efforts to do something for Him and my race. He knew the intents of my mind, its innermost desires.

God knew the Lutheran Church from of old. He knew her works, the preaching of the pure Gospel, the true administration of the holy Sacraments, the Christian day-schools, where His lambs are fed daily, the hymns of praise and adoration to Jesus which are sung by millions of Lutherans throughout the world to-day, and willed to bring me and my race in touch with the Lutheran Church in order that we might be led out of darkness into light.



Rev. C. F. Drewes.

When Pastor Bakke carried the report on the Rosebud school back to headquarters at St. Louis, God touched the heart of Pastor Drewes and directed him to call a meeting of the Mission Board for the afternoon of January 3, 1916, to consider the question of entering the new field in Alabama. Pastor Drewes states that he was reminded of Paul's vision at Troas. A vision appeared unto Paul in the night. There stood a man of Macedonia and prayed, saying, "Come over into Macedonia and help us." Acts 16, 9.

I will say that the appeal from Alabama was nothing less than another Macedonian cry, "Come over into Ala-

bama and help us"; for when Pastor Bakke returned to St. Louis from Rosebud, in December, 1915, to make his report on the Rosebud school, I continued in prayer, asking the Lord to move the hearts of the leaders or the authorities to consider my cry favorably.

The Holy Spirit worked among the members of the Mission Board wonderfully at that special meeting, January 3, 1916. They resolved to enter the new field at once, and Pastor Bakke was instructed to return to Alabama and remain there until the work was well organized. Mr. J. Lee Bonner and I had suggested to Pastor Bakke that it would mean much in the work if a good colored man were placed at the head after it was well organized; therefore the Mission Board instructed Rev. William Harrison Lane, who was then assistant missionary in St. Louis, to repair to Rosebud also.

Shortly after this, Pastor Bakke wrote a letter informing me of the transaction of the Mission Board in its special meeting of January 3. It was on a Sunday in January, 1916, while I was sitting in the Methodist church at Rosebud, that Mr. Bonner's cook handed me the letter from Pastor Bakke. I opened the letter and read it, holding it down behind the seat in front of me. By the time I had finished reading it, the Methodist preacher had ended his sermon and had seated himself. Soon after I arose and passed out of the church, leaving my twenty-five cents church dues on the collection table. Since then I have gone to that church only once, and that was to attend my sister Viola's funeral.

Pastor Bakke arrived in Rosebud to begin mission-work on January 13, 1916. Mr. John Bonner, the eldest son of Mr. J. Lee Bonner, met him at the station. Pastor Bakke boarded at the home of the Bonners during his stay in Rosebud. It was a great protection for him to live with

this reputable family during his work among the colored people, which was a new thing in this section.

Five days after Pastor Bakke's arrival he unfurled the banner of Lutheranism in the Black Belt. He organized a Sunday-school, a class for baptism, and a confirmation class. In a heart-to-heart talk with me one day he said, "Rosa, it is a great thing to be a Christian." I did not know what he meant then, but I know now.

Each morning our school opened with short devotions. This was followed by a religious lesson, during which Pastor Bakke would catechize the whole school. Then the children recited verbatim the Bible History stories and the text of Luther's Small Catechism. The advanced pupils recited both text and meaning. After the lesson in religion, Pastor Bakke assisted me in teaching the secular branches until the arrival of Rev. Lane, February 6, after which Pastor Bakke taught religion, Rev. Lane instructed the advanced pupils, and I taught the smaller children.

The first Christian hymns which Pastor Bakke taught us to sing were the following: 1. "My Hope is Built on Nothing Less," 2. "Come, Thou Almighty King," 3. "Let Me be Thine Forever," 4. "I Love Thy Zion, Lord," 5. "Abide, O Dearest Jesus," 6. "Abide with Me, Fast Falls the Eventide," 7. "Alas, and Did My Savior Bleed," 8. "I Know that My Redeemer Lives."

Those words of praise to Jesus and the sweet German melodies made a lasting impression upon my heart. I thought then, and still think to this day, that the Lutheran melodies are the sweetest in the world. Give me my Lutheran melodies. Pastor Bakke had much patience and manifested a world of love for the colored people and a deep interest in their welfare; in other words, Dr. Bakke (or "Doc," as we affectionately called him among ourselves) carried the colored people in his bosom. During

the Christian instruction meetings and Sunday-school he would permit them to ask all kinds of questions. Sometimes he would stop right in the middle of a sermon to answer a question put to him.

In his audience there were always many who could not read. He would take time and teach them to sing the Lutheran hymns, one line at a time. He continued this method until even the little children and ex-slaves, who heretofore had never seen a happy day, could sing well a few stanzas of certain Lutheran hymns and recite the Lord's Prayer and the Apostles' Creed.

In meeting after meeting the bold and fearless preacher preached Christ and Him crucified; he defended the Cross; he proclaimed Luther's doctrine pure without fear or favor. The people flocked to hear him in great crowds from Rosebud and all the adjacent communities. Some came seeking the truth, some came to find fault, to criticize, and to condemn, while others came out of mere curiosity to hear this strange religion, as they called it.

The local preachers, having more influence among the common people than Dr. Bakke, went about and poisoned the minds of the so-called churchgoing people against him and prevailed with some of the catechumens to have their names erased from our list. They circulated all kinds of slander and even tried to turn our kind white friends against us. But God used Mr. and Mrs. J. Lee Bonner and the Hon. John T. Dale as instruments to stop such wicked plans. They crept into my little local school board. It broke up, and all of those who had been my strong supporters in my little school turned back and went no farther with me except Brother Ollie Ramsey and Brother Matthew Ramsey, who are now prominent members in our Christ Church at Rosebud.

The Methodists and Baptists, who formerly had fought

each other, now united their forces and took a decided stand against Lutheranism. It reminded me of the case of Pilate and Herod when Jesus was on trial before He was crucified; for the Bible says that after Pilate had sent Jesus to Herod to be tried, Pilate and Herod became friends, while before they had been enemies.

In spite of the work of these combined forces to stop the work, Pastor Bakke continued to preach the Word, the whole truth. It was in those Christian instruction meetings that I was first convinced of my sins. Dr. Bakke took the Law and showed us our sins and the wrath of God. He showed us what a terrible thing sin is, that we all have sinned, and that, unless we accepted the Savior of sinners, we should all be damned. There were a number of hearers who, like myself, became terrified and alarmed. Then he proclaimed the sweet Gospel-message and showed us our Savior and the grace of God. There was where I first learned to know what my Savior meant to me. There is where I became a Lutheran.

God was working with us. On Palm Sunday, Pastor Bakke and I, who had sown in tears, came forth rejoicing and bringing our sheaves with us. When Pastor Bakke was ready to begin the confirmation, he gave me the signal with a slight bow of his head. I drew near with faith, knelt down in the presence of a large multitude of people, and vowed to be faithful to the Lord and to my dear Lutheran Church unto death. Pastor Bakke placed his hand upon my head and quoted the following Bible-passage: "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the Day of Jesus Christ." Phil. 1, 6. Thus I became a Lutheran and severed my connection with the Methodist Church. I passed to my seat and thanked God that the light had shone into my heart, that my eyes had been opened to the way of salvation, that I was no longer in darkness.

Rosebud Congregation after Divine Services, May 16, 1926.

Christ Church is the mother of the thirty-three churches and preaching-places in Alabama.

I was the first one to be confirmed in Alabama, and a host of others followed; fifty-eight were baptized, and seventy were confirmed that day. Dr. Bakke said that it was the largest class which he had ever confirmed at any one time.

We had divine service on Good Friday. Pastor Bakke preached Christ and Him crucified to a packed house. On Easter Sunday he baptized more persons and organized our Christ Congregation, the mother church in Alabama. The new congregation consisted of seventy confirmed members, one hundred baptized members, and twenty-two voting members. After the organization we had our Easter program, the first wholly religious program ever presented in Rosebud.

Having the work well organized, Dr. Bakke returned to St. Louis shortly after Easter. He had been in Rosebud three and a half months. The morning he left, the entire school and a large number of the members met him on the way to the station, waving handkerchiefs and flowers as the car passed by, bidding him good-by.

Besides the preaching and teaching during his stay at Rosebud, Dr. Bakke supervised the remodeling of the schoolhouse and the completion of the new chapel we had begun. In order to help me prepare for my work as a mission-teacher, he gave me private lessons in religion. Every Saturday morning I went to Mr. Bonner's home and received Christian instruction from nine to eleven o'clock.

While sitting at the feet of Dr. Bakke during those religious periods, I heard wonderful things about that old, old story of Jesus and His great love for sinners. I received rich treasures, I found the pearl of great price, which I will not cast away, if God is with me, for ten thousand worlds.

Chapter 11. The Spreading of the Lutheran Mission-Work in Alabama.

Arise, therefore, and get thee down and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them. — *Acts 10, 20.*

It is indeed marvelous how the Lord Jesus presented opportunities, one after another, so that our Lutheran Church could spread in the Black Belt of Alabama. Dear reader, let me entreat you to pray as you read this part that you may see the almighty hand of God extending still farther the Lutheran mission-work in this dark section of ours.

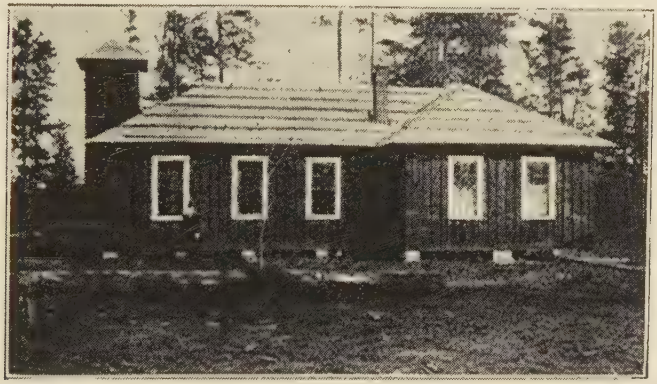
How Our Lutheran Church Came to Oak Hill.

The news of the organization of our Lutheran church at Rosebud soon spread abroad in all the adjacent communities. Brother James McBride, of Oak Hill, heard of this new denomination and its strange doctrine and came to Rosebud to see and hear for himself. That Sunday, while he was sitting in church, listening to Dr. Bakke's voice as he proclaimed the truth, Brother McBride was touched by the Holy Spirit. After the service he came up and joined our catechumen class for confirmation. After his confirmation he returned to his home and would not rest or hold his peace until a Lutheran church was organized at Oak Hill. St. Paul's Mission was begun there by Rev. Bakke, April 15, 1916.

How Our Lutheran Church Came to Possum Bend.

One day while I was teaching school at Rosebud, in 1916, an old, dirty, yellow man came up and took his seat under an oak-tree in the school-yard. Rev. Lane threatened to drive him away, as he looked very much like a tramp or a runaway. I begged Rev. Lane not to do that, but to let us find out what he wanted there. Rev. Lane

then gave me permission to speak to him. To my great surprise the old man wished us to place a mission at his home in Possum Bend. He had been working at a sawmill at Rosebud, that was why he was so dirty. On the nights that we had meetings he would come and sit in the yard, listening to the preaching. He said he felt too dirty to come into such a nice church. I encouraged him to go home and make a start, which he did. In the face of great discouragements this old man held on. He kept



Church at Possum Bend.

Type of Lutheran chapel in Alabama.
In the rear of this chapel there is a schoolroom.

writing me from time to time, until at last God sent His servant Rev. Bakke to Possum Bend; it was Thanksgiving Day, 1916. He organized a mission and called it "Our Savior." Old man Alex Etheridge died in the summer of 1922, during Pastor Carter's administration, in the full triumph of faith in his Savior.

How Our Lutheran Mission Came to Vredenburgh.

Sarah and Mary McCants, twin sisters, who were boarding at my house while they were going to school, at the time when Rev. Bakke first came to Alabama, were con-

firmed in the first confirmation class Rev. Bakke had at Rosebud on Palm Sunday, 1916. Shortly after, they went home and made preparations to start a Lutheran Sunday-school there. Their old friends and relatives tried hard to induce them to sever their relations with the Lutheran Church; but all their efforts were in vain. Their father gave them an old log cabin about a mile from their home. The girls scrubbed it and made some seats out of old pieces

Sarah and Mary McCants.

of a wagon-body which they carried there from home on their heads. June 1 I received a message from Pastor Bakke to repair to Vredenburgh. The next day I took my suit-case, first on my back, then in my hand, and walked the fifteen miles to Vredenburgh. It was very hot and dusty. I was obliged to inquire my way, as I had never gone over those roads before. I often stopped to drink water from the little streams I crossed, to quench my thirst. I arrived there late in the afternoon. That Sunday I named the girls' little Sunday-school St. Andrew's.

How Our Lutheran Church Came to Buena Vista.

Teacher James Montgomery, now Rev. Montgomery, who lived in Buena Vista, heard of the new church from the North at Vredenburgh. One Sunday he saddled his mule and came over to visit my Sunday-school. It made a favorable impression on him. He invited me to come over and speak to his people at Buena Vista. I went there August 20, riding on an ox-cart with Sister Luella McCants. That day I did not get a chance to speak to the people; so I remained overnight, but Sister Luella McCants returned with the ox-cart that night. The following evening I spoke to a large crowd. Quite a number expressed the desire to have a mission there. After making the second trip, I organized a Lutheran Sunday-school and called it St. James's Sunday-school.

How Our Lutheran Mission Came to Tinela.

I was sent to Tinela to see a white lady for the purpose of buying a plot of land for the new chapel at Vredenburgh. In order to get a favorable hearing with Mrs. Cannon, I first handed her my recommendation from Mr. J. Lee Bonner. During our conversation I gave her some of our Lutheran literature and explained a portion of Luther's Small Catechism. Mrs. Cannon remarked that she thought it would be very helpful to the colored people of Tinela to hear such teachings. At first I declined, saying that I had not been sent there to do mission-work, but to buy land. She smiled, but continued to insist and gave me the names of some colored people whom I should see that day before I left. I could not resist the temptation; so I called on the parties, and they made a date for me to return and speak to the people.

I returned to Tinela October 15 and held a meeting in the Union Baptist Church. On the next trip to Tinela,

November 12, I held a meeting in a dilapidated house of antebellum days.

Pastor Bakke and Rev. Otho Lynn both made separate trips to Tinela. The impression made upon them was unfavorable; so Rev. Bakke ordered me to go there and take up the Sunday-school books. I went to Tinela on the last day of December, 1916. The people were in the old log house, carrying on their Sunday-school. They were so glad to see me that at first I hated to tell them that I had come for the books. When I did tell them, they contended that I should give Tinela a chance and not take the books.

I appointed a meeting for the next day at ten o'clock and advised them to bring all the books. We met the next day, January 1, 1917. There was a large crowd. We opened the meeting with a short devotion. I then addressed them and gave them the privilege of speaking for themselves and asking whatever questions they wished. Fate Pryer and family, William Burgess and family, and John Davis and family expressed a desire to join the church. So I could not take the books away, but turned them over to Fate Pryer. I then organized the Sunday-school and called it Mount Olive.

How Our Lutheran Church Came to Midway.

One day while I was teaching at Vredenburgh, a Baptist preacher, Cornelius Smith, came and informed me that he knew of a good place for a mission and that the people would be glad to have one of our missions there. I asked where the place was, and he told me it was across the Alabama River at Midway, on Judge B. M. Miller's place. I asked for the names of some persons to whom I might write. He said I might write to C. P. Smith, Catherine, Ala. I wrote Rev. Smith a second letter before I received a reply. He wrote that the chances for building a Lu-

theran church there were just as good as at any place in Alabama and that he would be glad to have us.

I sent this letter to Rev. Bakke and wrote across the back "Special Attention." He wrote in haste that I should go to Midway. I did not go at once, as I wished to see Judge Miller and have his consent before going there. Judge Miller was then the circuit judge. When he came to Camden for court that fall, I went to see him. He granted me the privilege to go to Midway at once.

Chapel and School at Midway.
The gift of the late Albert Woelfle. Built at a cost of $2,200.

I set a date to go, but on that date there was a death in the family of the people with whom I was boarding. Therefore I had no one to take me, and the only other way would have been to go by way of Selma, which would have cost a good bit of money. Unwilling to make big traveling expenses for the Mission Board, I canceled that appointment and decided to wait for a more convenient time.

I succeeded in getting a team and went to Cobb's Landing and then crossed the Alabama to Midway. That Sunday, the first in December, I addressed a large audience in St. Michael's Baptist Church, representing my church and

its great mission-work. When my speech was ended, the people sang a plantation song, "O Lord, won't you come by here? O Lord, won't you come by here?" with the usual refrain.

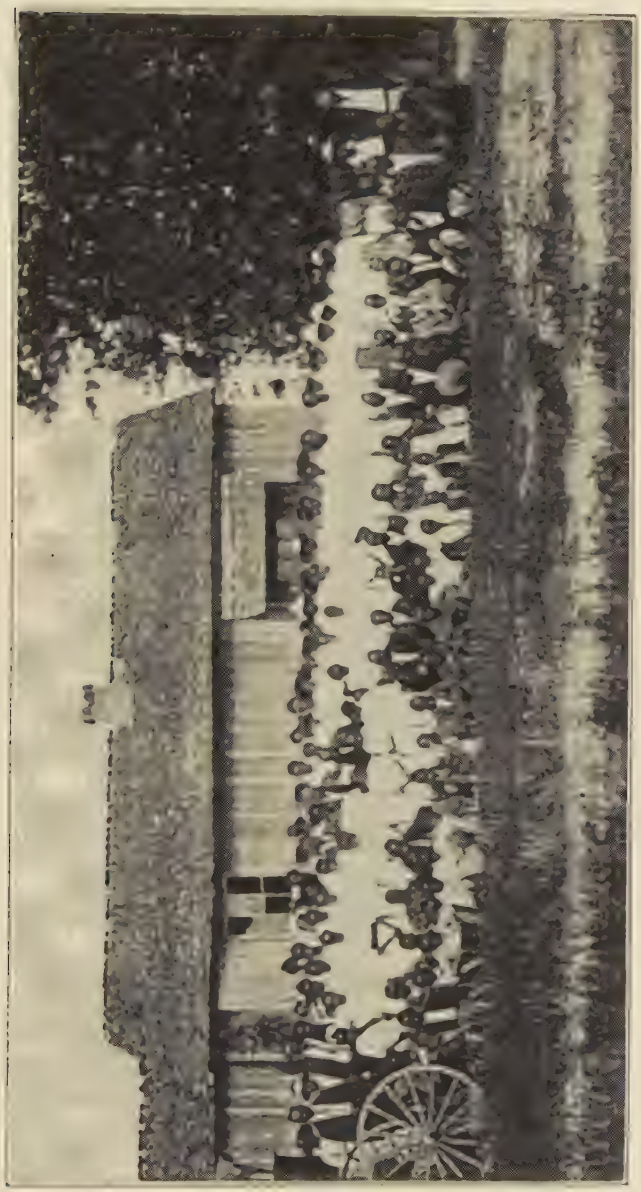
From Midway I went directly to Rev. Bakke at Oak Hill and made my report. The old Gospel veteran arose and went to Midway, December 7, carrying with him the Sunday-school books. The following March I received a letter at Vredenburgh from Pastor Bakke, telling me to

The President of the Congregation at Midway Carrying a Basket of Cotton.

pack my things and go to Midway. I arrived in Midway March 18, 1917, opened the day-school, and called it Mount Carmel.

How Our Lutheran Church Came to Tilden, Dallas County.

One day during the summer of 1916 Brother Ollie Ramsey met my brother Sam Young on the street in Selma and was telling him about our Lutheran church at Rosebud. Brother Sam became interested, saddled his horse, and came over to see me. I encouraged him, and he went to Rev. Bakke. He was commissioned to return to Tilden



In This Dilapidated Shack, Work was Begun at Ingomar.

This crowd of people attended the services held May 1, 1925, by Rev. G. A. Schmidt and Rev. C. F. Drewes.

and see what could be done. Amid adverse circumstances and persecution, Brother Sam influenced a number of people to give their names to receive Christian instruction and join the church. Rev. Bakke went to Tilden on November 12, 1916, and organized a Lutheran church and Sunday-school, which he called Mount Calvary, under a large, beautiful water-oak which stood in Brother Sam's yard.

How Our Lutheran Church Came to Ingomar.

One day Director Drewes was visiting our mission at Tilden. After services he walked about the grounds, talking to Brother Sam, at that time the teacher there. He raised his hand and, pointing toward Ingomar, said, "Sam, are there people living away over in that direction?"

"Hundreds of them," answered Sam.

"Well, can't you go over there and start another mission for us?" said Director Drewes.

After that day, Brother Sam went to Ingomar, rented a house, and got a large crowd together. They borrowed some lumber from a sawmill near by, carried it over to the house on their backs, and there arranged it for seats. Then they sent for Rev. Bakke. He answered their call at once. May 11, 1919, he preached the first pure Gospel sermon in Ingomar and organized a Lutheran mission, which he called Grace. After the service, Sam and the people shouldered the borrowed lumber and carried it back to the sawmill.

How Our Lutheran Church Came to Nyland.

One day while I was teaching school at Midway, I looked out of the schoolroom window and noticed a large crowd of people coming toward the school. There were so many people I hardly knew what to think. I just stood stock-still. When the crowd arrived, I found to my surprise that it was a delegation from Nyland, asking that

a mission be begun at Nyland, nine miles from Midway. I dismissed my classes and held an instruction meeting with them. Shortly after they had left the school, a great tempest arose and scattered the band. That night they had to seek refuge wherever they could, reaching home the next morning after wading through mud and water.

I arranged to go to Nyland and have a meeting with the people. That Friday night I had the opportunity to speak to a large audience, representing my Church and its work. They voted for a mission. I reported this to Rev. George A. Schmidt. He went to Nyland February 8, 1918, and organized a Lutheran mission.

Superintendent G. A. Schmidt.

How Our Lutheran Church Came to Taits Place.

While I was teaching at Midway, a delegation of two men, Walter Hill and Willie Kennedy, came to my Sunday-school one Sunday morning, seeking a Lutheran mission. I had instructions with them and made a date to go over and speak to their people. I had the privilege of representing my Church before a large crowd there. They also voted for a mission. I sent this report to Rev. Schmidt. He went to Taits Place and organized the mission the night of October 7, 1919.

After the First Service Held by Rev. Bakke in a School at Joffre.

Conference Held at Kings Landing, 1925.
Two conferences are held annually.

One can see at a glance how the Lord sent delegations to us, one after the other, which sought our Lutheran Zion. Therefore the following Bible-verse can well be applied to the Black Belt: "Arise, therefore, and get thee down and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them."

Chapter 12. Some of My Experiences as a Pioneer Worker for the Cause.

Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed; for the Lord, thy God, is with thee whithersoever thou goest. — *Josh. 1, 9.*

The very day on which I severed my relations with the African Methodist Church and joined the Evangelical Lutheran Church, willing to work for Jesus, was the day on which the devil turned the scales of the people against me. The host of friends I had in the sectarian churches deserted me. The good reputation I had was overthrown by the enemy. I was left, so to speak, alone, a friendless creature in this wide, wide world. Among the hundreds of letters I received annually there are even to this day hardly any from those colored people with whom I formerly was affiliated.

The leaders in the sectarian churches pledged themselves to overthrow the Lutheran Church. One preacher announced that he would be a wasp in my garments as long as I lived; but the poor man is dead now. They held meetings and councils one after another against me. They never held a service or an annual meeting but what there was something mean said about me. The enemy hung out my name at evil's door. Preachers stood up and proclaimed from their pulpits, "Rosa Young is a devil." Others proclaimed, "Rosa Young hath a devil." "Rosa Young is a Jezebel, an antichrist, a false prophet." "Rosa

Young is a Democrat; she is working for the white people. She is an old white-man woman; she is not fit to lead you-all. She is not fit to teach your children." All this slander hurt my feelings and sank into my heart like so many arrows.

The enemy cast stones upon me in public places and on the trains. From polished preachers and professors down to rude stable boys, people heaped slander upon me and my work. Whenever I succeeded in getting up a class for confirmation or baptism, the enemies would unite their powers to break it up. They would go around and stir up the poor, ignorant people by telling them that the Lutheran Church was going to put them all back under slavery if they sent their children to our schools. They said that after a certain length of time the Lutherans were going to send a black train through and take all the children away into some far country and reduce them to slavery. These reports would cause great excitement. The enemies would go about and say that the Lutheran Church would cut off the children's ears, brand an L on them with a red-hot iron as a mark of their denomination. Numbers of the poor, ignorant people believed this. The dreamers went out and reported that they had been to hell and had seen Rosa Young there yoked down with all the people who had followed her into the Lutheran Church; that Rosa Young was tearing up the churches; that she was leading the people to hell for money; that she ought to be Klu-kluxed, skinned alive, burned at the stake. What could I say or do to all this but remain silent? It went on until it finally shocked my nerves.

The people turned against me. I could not get a kind word or favor from my old friends. One afternoon I was obliged to go to Camden to buy some things for one of our missions. I could not get a train out until the next morning; so I had to stay overnight. Sad to say, not one family

in Camden among my former friends would let me remain in their home overnight. I wandered about on the streets that night until nearly eleven o'clock, trying to find a place to stay overnight. At last a little woman, a newcomer in Camden, whose husband was a sawmill man, sitting out on the porch waiting for her husband to come home from his work, spoke to me and said, "You can stay with me, lady."

I was so glad that I could have shouted for joy. I went into the house. She had but one bed, in which she and her husband slept. She offered me this, but I did not wish to rob them of their bed; so I declined and accepted a pallet on the floor.

When I went into these different communities to work up a mission, I was always obliged to find shelter or lodging with the most humble people, because the enemy had gone into the various sections before me and poisoned the minds of the better class or regular churchgoing people. So the people who were really able to care for a teacher looked upon our Church with contempt and scorn.

In many of the crude homes in which I had to board, I suffered great discomforts. Many a time I did not have sufficient bedding to keep myself warm and comfortable on cold nights. I had to retire with all my clothes on, except shoes and hat. Many a morning I had to leave for school and teach all day without a morsel to eat, for the host had nothing in the house with which to prepare a meal. On some days I would have two meals, on others one, and on still others none. At times I would become so hungry that I would go out into the pastures and eat blackberries, plums, and dewberries. During the winter months I would have nowhere to go to seek food, for the fields were dry and dead. Sometimes I would look at the roofs of all the houses in the community and wonder in which one I could get a piece of bread to eat if I should go there and ask for it.

Why did I not send to the store? Sometimes I was too far away from the stores and had no way of reaching them save on foot. At other times I did not have a penny with which to buy food. As my salary at that time was only $20 a month, nothing would be left save my railway fare home after I had paid my board, purchased a few clothes and the necessary books, and laid aside my contributions for the church.

During those dark days of suffering for bodily needs I had to go visiting in order to reach the people. Visiting is the key-note to success in mission-work. It unlocks the door of opportunity where you may enter many a home and tell the people the old, old story of Jesus and His love. I had no conveyance to carry me from place to place except my feet. Sometimes I would walk all day in the cold wind or in the hot sun or through rain, mud, water, and sand-beds, through dense forests and swamps, over hills, across creeks and streams, to reach my people and deliver a Gospel-message.

In some communities in which I worked I could once in a while rent a horse to ride. Sometimes I would start out from home on horseback and ride all day, going from house to house, and when I dismounted at night, I would be so sore and stiff that I could not stand up when my feet touched the ground. I would just fall to the ground.

Once I was asked by Rev. Bakke to go to a new place to begin work. I had to go by railway and change trains at a certain junction. When I reached the junction, I learned that the train was late. It was due to arrive at the junction at eight o'clock, but did not get there until midnight. There was no railway station there, only a small place where the conductor would go for a few moments to attend to his railroad affairs. I was the only lady to leave the train; one man alighted also, and there were

several colored men waiting for the arrival of the next train. It was due from Centry, Fla., and they were expecting some whisky. All the men went into the little room, but I remained standing outside. I stood there so long that white frost formed all over the top of my hat, and I was nearly chilled through.

I reached my destination the next morning about eight o'clock, as I had to change trains once more.

Once I was boarding with a young couple, members of ours. They quarreled one night and parted, and the husband left the home. The next day I went down to the church and stayed there until night, when the sexton came to repair the church-bell. I told him of my trouble, and he took me to his home. His wife bade me welcome at her home and baked some corn bread, while her husband went to the store and bought a box of sardines. That night I had bread and sardines for supper. I used the sexton's pocket-knife, as there was no tableware in the house. Such poverty is found in many, many homes down here.

When I was ready to retire, the lady took me into another room, where there was a large pile of seed-cotton they had picked that fall. In a corner there was piled an old bed which they had taken down to destroy the bedbugs. My host leveled the pile smoothly and spread a quilt over it. He turned over a large cotton-picking basket, and I seated myself upon that for a chair. I sank so deep into the cotton, and I was so tired, that I felt as though I were sitting in a reed-rocker.

At once place where I boarded, the room was so open that I had to put on my rain-coat and stretch my umbrella over myself at night in bed to keep from getting wet when it rained. Once I boarded with a non-Lutheran family, and because I would not partake of the Lord's Supper in their church, my host put me out. About sunset that eve-

ning I walked to another home and told the lady that the foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests, but that I had no place to lay my head. She invited me in. I remained there three months; but because I would not attend her church, I had to move again.

At once place we had only a few female members, and all were somewhat dull; there was not much get-up about them. One of those women died. Not one of our members could shroud a person. I went to the non-Lutherans, but they refused; so I had to go back and shroud the woman myself. It was the first time I had ever touched a dead person. At the grave I had to go among the crowd of men and beg some to help cover the grave.

Once I was at a place where I had to live in a church. I could find no home in the community. Two little motherless girls lived with me. During the day the little girls would go home to help work in the fields and return at night. We cooked our meals on the heater. One evening Pastor Drewes came there to visit me. We were cooking on our heater when we heard that he was coming. We were ashamed to have him find us cooking there; so we hurried out of the room with our skillet of meat and hid it under the church. We hurried so fast to have the skillet hidden before Director Drewes reached the place that after he was gone, we couldn't find it; and the funny part of it was that when we did find it, a dog had eaten all our meat. All three of us stood there stock-still, for we had no more meat. That night we had bread and water for supper.

I was afraid to raise the windows at night; so during the hot weather I suffered much for lack of fresh air. One night, about midnight, some passers-by came along. The little girls were fast asleep, but I was still awake, as I did not sleep much in that church. The passers-by began to whistle to each other as they approached the church. They

drew nearer and reached the door. They made a curious noise at the door. I remained silent. Then I heard them say, "They are not here." My heart beat fast as I prayed to the Lord to protect us.

One night I was at the church cooking my and the little girls' supper. I was alone, as they had gone to sell blackberries. Suddenly I grew afraid. I went out to ring the church-bell (the brethren had told me to do so if anything disturbed me); but I was not able to do so as the wind had blown the rope onto the top of the church. I returned indoors and continued with the cooking for a while. Finally I became so frightened that I ran from the church to the home of the nearest neighbor until the little girls came.

At another time I was at a place where my Church was accused of being a German Church. It was during the World War. There was great excitement, and a number of the members in fear denied, like Peter, that they belonged to the Lutheran Church or knew anything about it. When the news reached me, I gathered together all my religious books and carried them to those in authority. I took along the letter I had received from Booker T. Washington in order to prove to them that the Lutheran missionaries were no spies or intruders and that I was the whole cause and was to blame for it that they were in Alabama. The first day I did not succeed in getting a hearing, but I returned the second day and was successful. I presented Booker T. Washington's letter to them. They kept it, and thus I lost possession of that important letter.

After that the Hon. J. T. Dale, of Oak Hill, wrote to them and settled the excitement. The Hon. J. T. Dale, Mr. J. Lee Bonner, Judge B. M. Miller, and Mr. Dennis Forte were instruments in the hands of God to save our Mission in war-times. They helped us win a battle.

Chapter 13. What the Lutheran Church Has Done in Alabama for the Colored People.

So shall My Word be that goeth forth out of My mouth; it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

Is. 55, 11.

God's Word is always the same. These words spoken through Isaiah to the world hundreds of years ago are just as true to-day as they were then, as is clearly manifested in our mission-work on the Alabama field in these last evil days.

You have read in the previous chapters how our Lutheran Church came to Alabama, an unknown Church, in the midst of war-times, and in the face of great persecution and slander. The Lord's Word proclaimed by the missionaries did not return to Him void, but went forth and accomplished that which He pleased and prospered in the thing whereto He sent it. We have now in Alabama twenty-nine colored Lutheran congregations and several preaching-places. At these twenty-nine places, where the Bread of Life is being broken to old and young, we have a total membership of 2,200 souls, all live, active members of the Savior's Church in the Black Belt. Just think of it, a few years ago this vast number of people had never heard of the Lutheran Church.

The above figures do not represent all the people our Church is reaching through our day-schools, divine services, Sunday-schools, mid-week instruction meetings, literature, and missionary visits. In every community where our Lutheran Church is established the seed of God's Word is sown upon the hearts of hundreds of persons not listed in our mission-records. Through the religious books, especially the Catechism and the Bible History, which the children carry into their homes in the benighted Black Belt,

many mothers, fathers, relatives, and friends learn to know of Jesus and His great love for sinners. Once a young woman came to our superintendent and asked to be taken into the Lutheran Church. He asked where she had learned about the Lutheran Church and why she wished to join it. She answered that her little brothers were attending the Lutheran school in East Selma, and through them she had learned to know and love the Lutheran Church.

God alone knows how much glorious Gospel-light has illumined hundreds of formerly dark and dreary cabins through the religious schoolbooks the children carry into their homes. Old and young into whose ears and hearts the Word of God has sounded rejoice in the knowledge, yes, a saving knowledge, of a loving Savior who died on the cross for their sins.

In the thirty schools of the Black Belt there are 37 female teachers, 9 male teachers, and 1 pastor, teaching 1,700 children the one thing needful, namely, the Word of God. Our Sunday-schools have an enrolment of 1,419 pupils who are learning the Word of God. I refer to the streams of blessings which flow from these nurseries into the cabins of ignorance and sin of the colored people here in the Southland.

The Lutheran Church with its pure Gospel is stirring every community in which it has been established. Both Lutherans and non-Lutherans have felt the effects of it. The power and influence of the unadulterated Word of God which she is proclaiming has transformed people into wholly new and different creatures. The people who have come in contact with our Lutheran Church and have not hardened their hearts against its divine teaching are radically different. They speak, act, think, and look different. They see things in a different light. It is marvelous, show-

ing the great power of God's Word. The same people, possessing the same bodies, reason, judgment, and senses as before, but they are transformed beings in every way and seem to be living in a new world.

The Lutheran Christian hymns of praise to Jesus are fast taking the place of the old plantation melodies in the homes, schools, and churches, and in the fields as well. Since the Lutheran Church has come into the Black Belt with the pure Gospel of Jesus Christ, numbers of colored people who previously never thought of God's Word are reading the Bible daily. In homes where parents and children once lived in hellish riot, in homes where hatred, anger, vice, shame, sin, adultery, fornication, and theft prevailed, there has been a great change through the power of God, and they have become Christian homes. In many a home in which formerly no Christian hymn had ever been sung, no prayer uttered, and no Bible read, there is now a family altar morning and evening.

The Lutheran Church has even thrown light on the sectarian churches around it. They do not conduct those noisy revivals in the way in which they once did before the Lutheran Church came into the Black Belt. Those revivals were actually horrible. The people were told that in order to find Christ, they must go into the woods, fields, and graveyards; that they must quit eating, drinking, bathing, and changing their garments; that they must quit speaking to people, tie up their heads, cover their faces, pull off their shoes, and go mourning all their days to find Jesus and peace for their souls; that, when they were converted, they would know this of themselves, for they would hear strange noises and see strange sights; they would then go to hell and see the devil and his angels; they would walk across hell on a spider-web; the hell-hounds would run them all the way back from hell to earth

again; they would go to heaven and see Jesus and talk with Him of their troubles. Now, if a convert failed to see, hear, and do any of these strange things, he was considered unconverted and was refused membership in the church.

Another way the sectarian churches had of securing Christians was manufacturing them. A long bench called the mourners' bench was placed in front of the pulpit. All of those who were seeking religion would be obliged to go up and take their seats on that bench. After the preacher had ended his sermon, the mourners would kneel down, and all the members and the preacher would gather about them, stamping their feet, clapping their hands, holloing and praying at the top of their voices. Sometimes all the members in the church would be praying at the same time, just as loud as they could. Many a time the mourners were nearly frightened out of their wits.

Since the Lutheran Church has come into the Black Belt with the pure Gospel, and lighted these dark sections, the big revivals are fast losing ground. The people's eyes have been opened to the true way of salvation. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. Even the sectarian preachers themselves no longer force this way of conversion as strongly as before. One sectarian preacher who had preached to the people for some thirty years stood up and said publicly, "Oh, if I had the opportunity to go back over all those sermons which I have preached, I would pick out all the false doctrine and tell you the truth." Another preacher confessed, "We know that we have not been preaching the Bible, the truth, to you people. We just preached to suit you-all; but from now on I, for my part, am going to preach the Bible."

What about all of those who are lost in hell because of your false doctrine, Brother Preacher? What if on Judg-

ment Day thousands of those damned in hell will rise up and say, "Lord, we are lost because our preachers did not show us the true way to heaven"?

Permit me to point out a few examples of persons who were honored members in the church, but were on the wrong road to heaven. There is

Old "Uncle" Simon,

who just learned the true way to heaven in the evening of his life; for "Uncle" Simon was an old, gray-haired man,

A School in the Woods, Longmile, Ala.

wrinkled and stooped with the burden of some eighty-odd years when he learned the true way to heaven.

"Uncle" Simon was not a vile sinner; he was a member of a sectarian church, a deacon for forty years. He was honored and loved by both white and colored alike. A white man who owns one of the largest plantations in Wilcox County told our superintendent that he knew of no other person in whom he had greater confidence than "Uncle" Simon. He had a peaceful home, where both men and women went for advice and where little children went to play. He tried hard to keep God's holy Law; but there was one thing lacking — "Uncle" Simon did not know his

Savior. It was on February 19, 1922, in Sid McDowell's home on the Longmile place, where Rev. Schmidt preached the first Lutheran sermon, that "Uncle" Simon's blinded eyes were opened to the true way of salvation. He testified to that fact himself when he said, "If the Lutheran Church had not come, I would have gone to hell." "Uncle" Simon fell asleep in Jesus August 19, 1924.

Bettie Skinner.

Bettie Skinner testifies that she was troubled about her sins and her inability to keep God's holy Law. Like the dove let out of the ark that could find no rest for the sole of its feet, so Bettie Skinner could find no rest or peace for her heart and conscience. Yes, she had tried other churches in a vain effort to find something that would quiet that annoying and accusing voice within. Neither the church to which she belonged nor any other could give her soul the desired relief. Her husband, who was a preacher in the church to which she belonged, could not help her. In her earnest, but vain endeavors she asked others to give her a truly satisfying answer to the question, "What must I do to be saved?" Tossed about with fears and doubts and misgivings, the load of sin she carried was oppressive, and the future looked dark for this colored woman.

It was in 1923 that God led Bettie Skinner to a Lutheran church one night, when a meeting was being held in an old rented house, 520 First Ave., Selma, Ala. The Lutheran pastor spoke of the forgiveness of sins and directed those present to the Lamb of God slain for sinners, with whose blood God wipes out all their sins. While the pastor was proclaiming the pure Word, the Holy Ghost entered Bettie Skinner's heart and opened her eyes to the sufficiency of Christ's blood and God's mercy. After the meeting she said, "I never knew that wonderful truth be-

fore. Everything looks so different now." She joined the Lutheran Church.

Later she was given a position in one of our schools. Fired with love for the Savior and anxious to bring to others the gladsome message of the Savior's kingdom, she is laboring faithfully in the cause.

"Aunt" Fannie.

Like thousands of other colored people, "Aunt" Fannie Steele lived in a little hut among the pine-covered hills near Nyland, Ala. Her eyes were growing dim, her body weak, her limbs feeble. Sitting in her home-made rocker by the fireplace during the long, rainy winter days and evenings, she had time to think, yes, to think as she had never thought before. Looking back, it was clear the world had not given her pleasure and wealth. A glance about the room in which she sat was convincing. Then there were her sins; many, many of them she could still recall. They troubled her. What should she do? Beckoning her not far away was the grave — and the Judgment. Not a pleasant thought for "Aunt" Fannie. She was afraid to die.

The news of the meetings held on Tuesday nights at Nyland in a log cabin by a Lutheran preacher reached the ears of this old grandma one night as she sat in her rocker by the fireplace. It stirred her into action. She came to hear. She came again and again. Glorious words she heard, words about a Savior, a gracious, loving Savior, who died for sinners. God's Spirit sealed the message in her heart and made her happy. Now she could cherish a hope, the glorious hope of everlasting life in heaven. Gazing into the flames playing about the burning logs in the fireplace, she thought such happy thoughts of Jesus, her Savior; thoughts of forgiveness through His blood and salvation through Him; thoughts of the home eternal in the heavens.

Poverty drove "Aunt" Fannie for shelter to the home of a daughter miles away from her Lutheran church, but she refused to be separated from it. She could not read the Bible. The more reason why she should hear her pastor preach. What mattered it that she must use her few pennies for a railroad ticket; that early in the morning, when it was still dark, she must stumble along the road to find the station; that, because she had no clock, she would arrive at the railroad station hours before train-time?

"Aunt" Fannie attended the Lutheran services. God strengthened her and increased her faith. "Aunt" Fannie is a shining light in the sin and darkness of the Black Belt. Her heart is full of Christ; it overflows with gratitude to God; she incessantly talks about her Lutheran Church on the road, in the homes, wherever she happens to be. Her faith also bore fruit; for it was through her that our Lutheran Church came to Lamison and to Arlington.

Patsey Benson.

"Aunt" Patsey Benson had never joined a church. She was born in the time of slavery. During the Civil War her husband disappeared, never to return. What happened to him, whether he is dead or alive, no one knows. "Aunt" Patsey has since spent her days alone in a little one-room hut. She is now at least ninety-two, probably even ninety-six years old and is still active. She does her own little farm-work.

Before her conversion "Aunt" Patsey was a mean, selfish, and even a dangerous person. She cursed and would get furious over the slightest provocation. For this reason, people had nothing to do with "Aunt" Patsey; so she lived near the woods. Nothing seemed to make her more angry than if some one would tell her about God and

Rev. J. S. Montgomery and His Congregation at Arlington.
The chapel-school is the gift of a friend in California.

heavenly things. It is reported that she even threw hot water and irons at those who attempted to speak to her about her soul.

The first time the Lutheran preacher, Rev. John Thompson, approached her, he greeted her. In answer to his greeting, "Aunt" Patsey replied, "Who is you? I ain't got no time to be worried with you-all!"

The pastor answered, "We'll wait until you have finished your work."

"Aunt" Patsey, Ackerville.

"Aunt" Patsey left the room, saying, "Don't you let me find you here when I come back!"

The missionary obeyed orders and left. Others watched and laughed. A few days later Rev. Thompson returned. "Aunt" Patsey saw him coming and closed her door. Several times the missionary called at her little hut, but no answer came from behind the closed door. Several more times the missionary called.

One cold morning Rev. Thompson arose with "Aunt" Patsey on his mind. He went to her home. The door was closed, but as it was so early, the missionary was convinced that she could not be far away. He looked about and spied

her at the foot of a steep hill with a load of wood in her arms. When "Aunt" Patsey saw the missionary, she stood still, but said nothing. He went down the hill and carried the wood to the cabin, chopped it, and carried it into the cabin. Then it was that the first kind words fell from the lips of "Aunt" Patsey. "Well," said she, "you are good for something after all."

The missionary took this opportunity to tell her of the One who had done far more for her than he. "Aunt" Patsey replied, "Well, you will have to come another time to tell me about that."

A few days later the missionary returned and told "Aunt" Patsey that he had a letter to read to her. He began reading from the Gospel according to St. John. To show that she was not listening to him, "Aunt" Patsey went about her house singing and humming her peculiar melodies. This she continued to do during several visits which the missionary made after this.

One evening, to the missionary's surprise, "Aunt" Patsey seemed to have been waiting for him. She gave him a box to sit upon and sat down beside him, ready to listen to a lesson from the Bible. The missionary sent a prayer to the Throne of Grace. He spoke seriously to her about her soul, about sin, hell, damnation, forgiveness, salvation, and heaven. God blessed those words as He had on the previous occasion. "Aunt" Patsey was crushed and asked to be received into the church. On December 13, 1927, she was admitted as a member. Think of it, being baptized when over ninety years of age!

Now, dear readers, if the Lutheran church-work in the Black Belt brought no other fruit than the saving of the souls of the few persons whom I have named: "Uncle" Simon, Bettie Skinner, "Aunt" Fannie, and "Aunt" Patsey; yes, if it had no other fruit than the saving of

the soul of just a one-hour-old infant, it would be more than compensated for all the energy and money spent and all the prayers offered on the entire Alabama field. Think of the worth of a soul in the sight of God!

Just think what would have become of the 2,200 souls listed on our mission records if God had not sent the true Church into this benighted land! "Uncle" Simon declared that he would have gone to hell if the Lutheran Church had not come. Hundreds and hundreds of others, old, middle-aged, young men and young women, and little children are testifying to the same thing. "If the Lutheran Church had not come, I would have gone to hell." I am another witness to the same fact; for if the Lutheran Church had not come, I should have gone to hell. Dear readers, oh, listen! Can you not hear that great number of voices of the ignorant, destitute colored people coming out of the Alabama graves, saying, "If the Lutheran Church had not come to me, I should have gone to hell"? Hush, listen! It is a voice of gratitude, a voice of thanks to the dear members of our Lutheran churches who have by their prayers and gifts of hard-earned money made it possible to send to such people the saving message of an uplifted and saving Savior. Hush, listen! It is a voice of pleading, asking the dear white Lutheran Christians not to grow weary; a voice urging them to continue in the blessed work of bringing to thousands of their fellow-beings who are still groping in darkness the glorious Gospel of a loving Savior before they sink into a Christless and hopeless grave.

To God, and to Him alone, be all glory for His blessing! May He, for Christ's sake, further bless the work of His Church in these last evil days, so that many more who are now traveling on the road to everlasting ruin may be rescued before it is too late!

Isaiah saw our sad condition when he proclaimed that darkness had covered the earth and gross darkness the people. God permitted the same prophet to see the remedy; and he opened his mouth and prophesied, saying, "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined." Is. 9, 2.

Chapter 14. Some Experiences During My Several Years of Illness.

Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place and rest a while.
Mark 6, 31.

The illness with which I have to contend at present I first experienced on a hot day in August, 1918, while on one of my mission-tours over the plantations down on the Alabama River.

During the summer months, when I was not teaching school, I made it a rule to visit every home in the community and also in the adjacent communities, both Lutheran and non-Lutheran. I made a list of the names of the people who did not belong to, or attend, any church. Such people I called my mission-material, and I endeavored by the help of the Lord to get them into my Church. As it was summer-time, I would find the people mostly in the fields. Many times they worked miles away from their homes; but no matter where they were or who they were, men, women, or children, I would find them and deliver my Bible-message to them.

The message which I delivered was taken from the Bible and was selected in this wise: Every morning I rose early and had my devotions, in which I prayed the Holy Spirit to be with me that day and to enlighten me by His Word, so that I would be able to teach it to others in all its

truth and purity. I also asked the Holy Spirit to cause the pure Gospel-message I would deliver to sink into the hearts of all to whom I would that day tell it. I would then choose a short Bible-verse, fill my hands with copies of the *Lutheran Pioneer,* and with a prayer in my heart I would set out on my mission-tour, seeking souls for Jesus all along the way.

I hunted lost souls for Jesus somewhat as I hunted for money to build and maintain my first school. I endeavored to tell this Bible-message to every person I saw that day. No matter how long it took me to work up to the point in our chat or conversation where I could deliver my Bible-verse, I would deliver it. When I had told my message to one person, I would proceed to another. I walked in prayer all along the way from one person to another, asking the Lord to bless the message of His Word as I delivered it.

The day on which I first experienced my present illness I was on one of these mission-tours. I left home very early one morning, before eating any breakfast, and went on foot to Robin's Place, which was several miles away from the plantation where I was boarding. I reached Robin's Place about nine o'clock on a hot day in August. By that time the people were all at work in the fields. I went from field to field, and by noontime I had visited all the people on the place. Then I went back to the Cade Place before the people went out to work that evening.

Seeing a few families still at their homes, I decided to visit them before they left for the fields and then return to my boarding-place and rest the remainder of the day. I first approached the home of an old couple, ex-slaves and non-Lutherans. I was tired, hot, sweaty, and thirsty. The man came out and invited me in. During the conversation, in which I was trying to work my way up to the point at which I could deliver my Bible-message, the old host asked

me if I liked melons. Being very fond of melons, I readily replied, "Yes, sir."

"Fix her a piece," he said to his wife.

The kind old lady disappeared into the kitchen and soon returned with a very fine, delicious piece of musk-melon on a white plate, with a towel to spread in my lap and a knife with which to eat the melon. I had eaten but a few mouthfuls when I felt somewhat sick. Feeling myself growing worse, I soon gave the fine dish of melon to the hostess and bade them good-by without even telling them that I was sick. There were two reasons why I did not inform the kind old people of the spell of sickness that had come over me. I thought they might fear that the melon they had given me had caused my illness and would therefore feel bad about it, or they might insist on my remaining with them until it had grown a little cooler. But as I grew steadily worse, I decided that it would be best for me to go to my boarding-place before I would be unable to walk at all.

I hurried through a large green pasture, lying down many times here and there in the shade of the trees I passed on my way and finally resting on the green grass under the burning sun, as there were no longer any trees to protect me. About sunset I finally reached my destination. From the time of that hot day in August, 1918, until 1927 I never saw another really well day, no matter where I was. Regardless of what I was doing or how well I looked, I was suffering somehow. Now, it was not the eating of that melon that caused my illness. I dare say this illness had been working in me for a long time, and it just happened to come on at this particular time when I was exhausted from the heat, thirst, hunger, and a walk of many a mile that day on the plantation.

When I reached my boarding-place, I was quite sick, yet I refrained from making it known to any one for fear

some one might wickedly accuse the kind old lady of dealing foully with me, which would hurt the feelings of those good old people in case it would reach their ears.

I went on thus for several weeks, growing worse all the time until finally I was forced to make an outcry and a physician had to be called. To my great surprise he said I was suffering from heart trouble and prostrated nerves, brought on by hard study, work, worry, insufficient nourishment, insufficient recreation and sleep, and unkind treatment. He advised me to give up teaching, step out of the busy stream of life, and let the current roll by. But I was so deeply involved in my glorious mission-work for Jesus that I thought the physician spoke like a foolish man.

Not willing to give up my post and lay down the work which I was doing for the Lord and my race, I continued to do my work and carried around with me a sick body. Many a night I was too sick to sleep; all the night I wrestled with pain, without, however, making it known to any one in the home where I was boarding. The next morning I would arise bright and early for school and teach all day, making my usual mission-visits in the afternoon. I kept up my private studies and all my correspondence, and besides this all the cares and perplexities of life pertaining to my work worried me and bore down upon me. Meanwhile I was going regularly from one physician to another, occasionally being obliged to call in first one, then another. From 1918 to 1922 I was treated by sixteen different doctors. In the effort to recover my health I had just about become bankrupt.

One Sunday in 1922 I sat down after church at Rosebud to answer some letters of my Northern friends and work out my monthly report, when I was suddenly attacked by the same old complaint and became its victim in the first degree. I probably would have died; but God, in His goodness and mercy, sent Mrs. J. Lee Bonner, my old white

friend, to the parsonage where I was boarding, with medicine, which gave me relief until a physician could be called. Faithful Mrs. Bonner! She did what she could. Pastor Peay came also and ministered unto me.

After this serious attack I was somewhat convinced of the truth of the physician's diagnosis and came to the conclusion that I should come out of the schoolroom and rest a while. Shortly afterward Teacher John Thompson, now Pastor Thompson, arrived from New Orleans to take charge of the school. I was asked to go to Selma, to Ala-

Alabama Luther College, Selma.
Erected in 1925.
On the left the Administration Building; on the right the Girls' Dormitory.

bama Luther College, to serve as matron. I gladly accepted the call, as I was willing to do something more for the Lord and my race, and I thought this would help out the Mission Board by saving them the expense of employing a matron.

I began this new work when the school opened its doors the first time, in November, 1922, and held out until along in the spring of 1923, when I had another breakdown. I remember asking my girls to call up Superintendent Schmidt and tell him to come and look after them, as I was just as sick as I could be. Rev. Schmidt, faithful

pastor, soon arrived and, coming to my bedside, pictured Jesus, my Savior, to me. I do not remember when he left the room or how long he was gone, but when I saw him again, he and Pastor Westcott were sitting by the fire watching me. When I looked up and saw those two faithful white pastors whom the Lord Jesus had sent there, my heart was so full I could have burst into tears, just to see how God will take care of us in spite of our slothfulness.

Church at Hamburg, the Gift of a Friend in Wisconsin.

This church stands within half a mile from the author's home.

The next day I was sent to the hospital, where I spent ten days. One morning after my return Rev. Schmidt informed me that I had to accept a vacation. I wept bitterly a long time. I thought it was so very unkind of Rev. Schmidt to take me from my work. Rev. Schmidt wept also, but he insisted that I accept the vacation. This was the first vacation I had had since I began teaching in 1909. The Mission Board had offered me one month's vacation every year with salary, but I had been so deeply engrossed in my mission-work that I could not see how I needed, or

could afford, a vacation. I had always said that I could rest all I wanted right on the job.

I left the dormitory for my home at Hamburg the next day. I had come home for a vacation, but I did not have

Our First School at Hamburg.

one altogether; for soon after my return home I began the Lutheran Sunday-school at my home, out of which grew the Gethsemane Lutheran Mission at Hamburg.

In the fall of 1923 I resumed my work as matron and held out fairly well until the spring of 1924, when I had

another breakdown. Again I was obliged to give up my work and go home. During the summer of 1924 I offered my resignation as matron at Selma.

Shortly after I had resigned my position as matron at Alabama Luther College, Dr. Palmer, of Furman, Ala., announced that I must undergo a surgical operation. This was a shock to me and to all who heard it. I soon made up my mind, however, to have the operation performed as

Alabama Pastors in 1925.

From left to right: Rev. Cozart, Rev. Peay, Rev. Montgomery, Rev. Berger, Rev. Holness, Superintendent Schmidt, Student Kreft, Professor Lynn, Rev. Westcott.

I hoped in that way to recover my health, so that I might resume my mission-work. My mother took me to the Good Samaritan Hospital in Selma. The Lutheran pastors — blessed and faithful pastors they are — know how to take care of their members. They know how and with what to approach their people when they are drawing near to their last hours of life. They did not fail to visit me and comfort me with God's Word and humble prayer. Pastors Peay, Lynn, Lehman, Weeke, and Schmidt told me so

many beautiful things about heaven, about Jesus, the Savior, while I was there waiting for the operation to be performed that they drew my mind completely out of this world. I longed for the day of the operation; for I just thought that on that day I was going to die. I was going to heaven and see my Jesus. Rev. Schmidt was the last pastor to visit my room before the operation. He chose the text, "I am with you alway." Matt. 28, 20. That was the evening before the operation. After he left me, the words of that Bible-passage remained with me. All through the night, whenever I awoke, the first words that came to my mind were, "I am with you alway."

Wednesday morning I was strapped down on the operating-table at eight o'clock. I felt no fear. I was so glad because I thought Jesus was going to take me to heaven with Him that morning. The last thing I remember before I fell asleep was Rev. Schmidt's text, "I am with you alway." I was on the operating-table four and a half hours. Four doctors were there. They were all able men and experienced in their profession.

When I was brought out of the operating-room, I saw my mother and knew her. She told me that I said, "Mama, I am going to die and leave you."

"Well, you will go to heaven?" she answered.

"Where is Jesus?" said I.

She replied, "He is with you."

I then repeated the following: —

Jesus, Thou art a sinner's Friend;
As such I look to Thee;
Now in the bowels of Thy love,
O Lord, remember me.

The second person I remember recognizing was Rev. Schmidt. He asked me what the text was that he had given me the night before. I told him, "I am with you alway."

My operation was such a serious one that I considered it a miracle that it was successful. God preserved my life. Dr. Palmer told me later that at times he could not find my pulse, and then the operating surgeon would have to wait until my heart could gain more strength, sometimes from fifteen to twenty minutes at a time.

The next severe attack which I suffered after the operation was during the summer of 1925. Dr. Palmer had to make forty visits in succession. At one time he had to put me to sleep and let me sleep for two weeks. After this long sleep he let me awaken. When I awoke, I seemed to have lost control of myself to a great extent. I felt afraid that I would become insane; but the doctor said my mind was all right; my heart was sending the blood along the arteries so slowly that the brain was starving. That summer it was announced that I was deceased. Rev. Schmidt, the other pastors, and a few teachers came to lay my remains away to rest. But Jesus preserved my life.

The next attack I suffered was during the summer of 1926. That summer is one long to be remembered by me, for the attack was worse than the one I had the previous summer. Dr. Palmer had to make about one hundred visits to my bedside. I was speechless for a while and then became partly like an insane person. Dr. Palmer fought the case like a hero. He said he left me many a night not expecting ever to see me alive again. But Jesus preserved my life. Our missionaries spared no pains in keeping Jesus before me. They ministered to me faithfully. In 1927 I found relief to a great extent. During that year I was sick all along, but God allowed me to see some well days. Some days passed without bringing me pain and misery.

Dear readers, it is indeed a great thing to be a Christian. If I had not known my Savior and trusted Him as I did, where would I be to-day? Jesus has done great

things for me. The Word of God which I had learned in our dear Lutheran Church was all that I had to depend upon, and in His Word I found comforting passages to suit every stage and condition of my sickness. The Holy Spirit brought all things I needed to my remembrance.

While suffering bodily, I also suffered persecution from my enemies. There were preachers in the sectarian churches who stood in their pulpits and laughed me to scorn, proclaiming, "It is good for her. God is punishing her for bringing the Lutheran Church into Alabama." They even dared their members to visit me in my sickness. Besides the persecution of the enemy I had to struggle with the devil, who was trying to prove to me that Jesus did not love me any more, that it was useless to try to still hold on. But the grace of the Lord Jesus was sufficient. My constant prayer was, "Thy will be done." I hereby wish to thank the Church at large that ministered unto me by word and deed.

I am thankful to be able to report that I am still in the land of the living. Although not well, I am able to see some days of ease, days without pain or misery. I am in the hands of God. I do not know what Jesus may still have in store for me to do or suffer on earth. I can only hear His sweet voice saying to me, "Come ye yourself into a desert place [of sickness] and rest a while." I shall be here in this desert place of sickness until Jesus directs me what to do next. Now He tells me to rest a while, think of heavenly things, and pray for my Church at large.

Conclusion.

Dear readers, I bring this little volume to a close, as I began it, by making an apology for writing it. Please do not get the idea that I am trying to make myself out a saint here on earth without sins. Not so. I am a poor sinner; my sins are many. I have sinned much in thought,

word, and deed and therefore give all glory and praise for this little volume to Jesus, for it belongs to Him and not to me. Pray for me that I may continue in the faith of my dear Lutheran Church, so that, when civilization shall confess like a weary traveler upon a dusty road, "I have gone as far as I can," when all the achievements of mankind shall have crumbled beneath the iron-clad hoofs of time, and time itself shall be swallowed up in the vast sea of eternity, even thus, as you sit by the river of life making sweet melody with your heavenly harps, I, with thousands of colored people whom God will have led from the spiritual darkness in the Black Belt of Alabama, can be heard singing praises to Jesus, the Savior of sinners, whom I have learned to know so well through His Word in our Lutheran Zion. If the Lutheran Church had not come into Alabama and led us out of spiritual darkness into the light of God's Word, where would we have been?

Thou, whose almighty Word
Chaos and darkness heard
And took their flight;
Hear us, we humbly pray,
And where the Gospel's day
Sheds not its glorious ray,
"Let there be light!"

Thou, who didst come to bring,
On Thy redeeming wing,
Healing and sight,
Health to the sick in mind,
Sight to the inly blind,
Oh, now to all mankind
"Let there be light!"

Spirit of Truth and Love,
Life-giving holy Dove,
Speed forth Thy flight.
Move o'er the water's face,
Bearing the lamp of grace,
And in earth's darkest place
"Let there be light!"

Blessed and holy Three,
All-glorious Trinity,
Wisdom, Love, Might!
Boundless as ocean's tide
Rolling in fullest pride,
Through the world, far and wide,
"Let there be light!"

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